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The Student, the Teacher, and the Text : an Ethnography of the Literary Acculturation Process in Three Undergraduate Literature Classrooms

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A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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June 1992

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ABSTRACT

THE STUDENT, THE TEACHER, AND THE TEXT: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE LITERARY ACCULTURATION PROCESS IN THREE UNDERGRADUATE LITERATURE CLASSROOMS

by

Matthew Justice Quartey

Chair: William Green

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

Title: THE STUDENT, THE TEACHER, AND THE TEXT: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE LITERARY ACCULTURATION PROCESS IN THREE UNDERGRADUATE LITERATURE CLASSROOMS

Name of researcher: Matthew Justice Quartey

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In this study I describe the context and environment in which students in three undergraduate literature classrooms in a mid-western parochial university "acquired a sense of literature," as well as the role played by their teachers in the process. As qualitative research, the study seeks to provide additional insight and understanding of the process of acquiring literary competence.

While participant observation and interview were the principal methods used in gathering data, the data also included the use of documents. I examined course syllabi, students' journals, students' written work, and school documents. I also observed each

of the three classes at least ten class periods. Each of the three teachers and one student from each class were interviewed several times. The teacher interviews elicited information that placed such elements as teacher's theoretical framework and pedagogical practices in perspective. Interviews with the students, among other things, sought their views and opinions about literary theory and competence, and their expectations about the class.

The study points out several factors that appeared to influence how students develop a sense of literary competence. These include the class environment, class size, the pedagogical method adopted by the teacher, and the text used for the class. Other specific ways in which teachers affected the acculturation process are also discussed. The study concludes by raising some concerns that emerged from the study about the teaching of literature.

DEDICATION

To Sophie with love

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ix

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS x

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION 1

Rationale of the Study 8
Purpose of the Study 9
Definition of Terms 10

II. FIVE INFLUENTIAL LITERARY THEORIES 12

New Criticism 15
Structuralism 21
Post-Structuralism/Deconstructionism 31
Feminist Criticism 40
Reader-Oriented Criticism 49
Summary 67

III. DESIGN OF THE STUDY 68

Sources of Data 73
Documents 73
Observations 73
Interview 74
Criteria for Selection of Class and/or Teacher 75
Ensuring Credibility 76
Listen More, Talk Less 76
Recording Accurately 76
Writing Early 77
Providing Primary Data 77
Reporting Fully 77
Being Candid 78
Feedback 78
Achieving Balance 78
Analysis of Data 78

Overview of the Study 80
Generalizability of Findings 81
Ethical Considerations 83

IV. CASE ONE: DAVID SLOCUUM'S LITERARY ANALYSIS CLASS 84

Description of Course and Assignments 84
Class Setting 85
Classroom 85
Meeting Times 86
Class Composition 86
Typical Periods 87
Five Minutes before Class 87
10:30 a.m. Class Begins 88
The Full Class Session 89
Two Group Sessions 90
Several Groups Session 92
Last Two Minutes of Class 93
The Text 94
Representation of Text Used 94
By Sex of Author 94
By Author's Ethnic Origin 97
By Period 97
The Teacher: David Slocuum 97
Literary Background and Teaching Experience 97
Philosophy of Literature 99
The Literarily Competent 99
The Benefits of Literature 100
What Is Good Literature 103
Pedagogical Approaches 104
Philosophy of Evaluation 105
A Sense of Goal Accomplishment 107
Critical Theory and Current Trends 108
The Student: Julian Moyers 111
Background and Expectations 111
Reaction to the Text Before, During and After Class 112
Defining Good Literature 113
Getting Meaning From the Text 114
On Pedagogy 115
The Literarily Competent 116
Summary 117

V. CASE TWO: STEPHEN BURKE'S AMERICAN LITERATURE II CLASS 118

Description of Course and Assignments 118
Class Setting 120
Classroom 120
Meeting Times 121
Class Composition 122
Typical Periods 122
Five Minutes Before Class 122
9:30 a.m. Class Begins 123
The Devotion 124
The "Lecture" 125
Biographical Sketch 125
Nature of Questions 126
Application to Contemporary Life Situation 127
Defining Literary Terms 128
The Text 129
Representativeness of Text Used 133
By Sex of Author 133
By Ethnic Origin 134
By Period 135
The Teacher: Dr. Burke 135
Literary Background and Teaching Experience 135
Philosophy of Literature 137
The Literarily Competent 137
Benefits of Literature 138
Encountering and Deriving Meaning from the Text 139
What Is Good Literature 141
Pedagogical Approaches 142
Philosophy of Evaluation 143
A Sense of Goal Accomplishment 143
Critical Theory and Current Trends 145
The Student: Alice Freeman 147
Background and Expectations 147
Reactions to the Text 148
Defining Good Literature 149
Getting Meaning From the Text 149
On Pedagogy 150
The Literarily Competent 151
Summary 152

VI. CASE THREE: DR. FOUNTAIN'S HONORS IN LITERATURE CLASS
Description of Course and Assignments 153

Class Setting 155
Classroom 155
Meeting Times 156
Class Composition 156
Typical Class Periods 157
Five Minutes Before Class Begins 157
9:30 a.m. Devotion and Announcements 158
The Quiz 158
The "Lecture" 159
Use of Teaching Aids 159
Reading and Explication 160
Use of Rhetorical Questions 164
The Text 165
Representativeness of Text Used 165
By Sex of Author 165
By Nationality of Author 166
By Period of Publication 167
The Teacher: Dr. Fountain 167
Literary Background and Experience 167
Philosophy of Literature 168
The Literarily Competent 168
Benefits of Literature 169
Encountering and Deriving Meaning From the Text 170
What Is Good Literature 172
Pedagogical Approaches 173
Philosophy of Evaluation 174
A Sense of Goal Accomplishment 175
Critical Theory and Current Trends 176
The Student: Tom Peters 177
Background and Expectations 177
Reactions to the Text 178
Defining Good Literature 178
Getting Meaning From the Text 179
On Pedagogy 180
The Literarily Competent 181
Summary 182

VII. CROSS CASE ANALYSIS 183

Analyzing Across the Cases 183
Course Descriptions and Assignments 183
Class Setting 184
Class Composition 185
Typical Class Periods 186
The Text 187

The Teachers 188
Literary Background and Teaching Experience 188
The Philosophy of Literature 190
The Literarily Competent 190
Benefits of Literature 191
What Is Good Literature 192
Pedagogical Approaches 193
Philosophies of Evaluation 194
A Sense of Goal Accomplishment 194
Critical Theory and Current Trends 195
The Students 200
Background and Expectations 200
Reactions to the Text 201
Defining Good Literature 201
Getting Meaning From a Text 202
On Pedagogy 202
The Literarily Competent 203

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND CONCERNS 204

Sense of Literature 204
Class Environment 204
Class Size 205
Pedagogy Method 205
The Text 206
How Teacher Affects the Process 207
Class Environment 208
Motivational Differences Among Students 208
Relationship of Grade to Attentiveness in Class 209
Encouragement versus Resignation 210
The Text 211
Concerns 213
Recomendations for Further Research 216

APPENDICES 219

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 271

VITA 280

LIST OF TABLES

1. Articles Published in *College English* 1981-1985 14

2. Breakdown of LIterature-Related Articles Published in *College English* 1981-1985 by Theoretical School of Thought 15

3. Literary Analysis Reading List 95

4. Breakdown of Works by Period 98

5. American Literature Reading List 130

6. Honors Reading List 166

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years there have been repeated calls for more and better attention to students' thinking and reasoning about what they are reading in all subject areas across the curriculum (Applebee, Langer, & Mullins, 1987; Boyer, 1983; Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). In English studies, this has meant a focus on the reading of literature, resulting in a lively discussion about the contribution of literature to the general world of academia.

To many in the colleges and universities, the teaching of literature is often treated only as a way to introduce students to the cultural knowledge, the great thoughts, and the high culture of society (Bloom, 1987; Hirsch, 1987). But it appears that the role of literature in the development of the sharp and critical mind has not been investigated enough. There is increasing evidence, however, from a number of sources that narrative thought is a part of the well developed intellect, and that it is important in contexts other than literature.

Putnam (1978) suggests that literary understanding, with its attention to how people live, is an important part of scientific thought, and that the imagination and sensibility that accompany literature are essential elements in scientific reasoning. In an article on law and literature, Dworkin (1983) argues that the understanding of law can

be enhanced by literary approaches to interpretation. Similarly, Elstein, Shulman, and Sprafka (1978), in a study of ways in which doctors arrive at diagnoses, have shown that doctors who usually use "logic" to reach a diagnosis turn to "storytelling" in solving difficult problems. In those situations, narrative thought becomes a productive alternative they usually turn to.

Generalizing across fields of inquiry, Bruner (1986) argues that there are two modes of cognition--narrative and paradigmatic--each with its own way of viewing reality. Full understanding, he suggests, is better achieved by using both the ordered thought of the scientist and the humanly inquisitive thought of the storyteller. The paradigmatic mode offers facts, objectivity, logical proofs, and reasoned hypotheses, while from the study of literature comes an understanding of the "vicissitudes of human intention" (p. 17). Britton (1983) contrasts the rule-governed thought of the scientist with the many-sidedness of literary thought, and concludes that literary thought is necessary for understanding the human experience. It is this focus on the human situation described by Britton that draws the individual into the act of thinking--as she or he experiences the events, emotions, and intricacies of human life. The experience, in turn, becomes available for analysis, introspection, and reflection.

Culler (1980) calls for increased understanding of the conventions readers refer to during the sense-making activity. He suggests the need for a reorientation of focus from the text to interpretive strategies:

> To account for form and meaning of literary works is to make explicit the special convention and procedures of interpretation that enables readers to move from one linguistic meaning of sentences to the literary meaning of works. . . . In brief, I am arguing that if the study of literature is a discipline, it must become a poetics: a study of the conditions of meaning and thus of reading. (p. 49)

This study is undertaken to understand the process of literary acquisition in order to describe the nature of literary acculturation. Instead of examining the students' understandings, the focus will be on the approaches they use in developing that understanding. Consequently, the study will ask and attempt to answer one central question: How do students acquire a sense of literature?

Unlike the natural sciences, literature does not thrive on concrete or quantifiable data as a basis for understanding or arriving at meaning. It relies on the subjective and independent insight that each student brings to the work. This in turn conditions the meaning that the individual attributes to the work. Readers ascribe meaning to, and are affected by, the work largely on the basis of how individual cultural and social settings have prepared them to do so. One would expect, consequently, that the pedagogical approaches employed in the literature classroom would reflect an understanding of the diversity that the students bring to the class. There is no shortage of books and articles devoted to interpretation and analysis of literary works. In the same vein, numerous books have explored various approaches to the teaching of the subject. Most of these efforts, however, are anecdotal or experiential. No study that I am aware of has described the relationship among the teacher, the student, and the text, in the context of the literature classroom.[1] Even I. A. Richards' (1929) classic work[2]

---

[1]My search of two of the most prominent educational databases--Dissertation Abstracts On-disk (DAD) and Educational Resources Information Catalog (ERIC)--found nothing that resembled the focus of my study in all particulars. I used the following descriptors in the search of the DAD database: [English and or American and or European and or world and literature] and [teaching or learning or study] and [methods or methodology or technique] and [elementary or secondary or college or university or school] and [ethnographic or ethnography].

For the ERIC database I used the broadest possible citation in the search. Below are the descriptors I used and their result:

reported in *Practical Criticism* documents only the response of the students to the poems he provided them.

A few studies have been undertaken, however, which bear on both the method and content of this present research project. One is Jean Bauso's "The Need for Pre-Reading Instruction" (1988). Bauso's experimental design required students to read several passages which had seemingly clear syntax, easy vocabulary, objects that were

---

	Descriptor		Results
1.	Ethnography	=	1371
2.	Literature	=	48,629
3.	# 1 and # 2	=	131
4.	# 1 with # 2	=	96
5.	teaching	=	127,979
6.	# 4 and # 5	=	55

The subject matter of 38 of the 55 citations dealt with something other than the subject of literature. Of the other 17 citations, none studied the relationship among the students, teachers, and text, the focus of my study, on any educational level in literature classrooms. The focus was often on either the teacher, as with veteran literature teachers and how they succeed, or on students, as with how literary responses are shaped through collaborative writing, or on a genre, children's literature.

Apart from these databases, I also searched books in print and the library card catalog for books dealing with the broad subject of ethnography and the teaching of English and literature. I searched the indexes for articles that had some bearings on the subject. In order for an article or book to be considered relevant to my study, however, it had to be a report or review of an empirical study or studies with some connection to the topic under consideration. Anecdotal or experiential accounts were looked at but were not considered as empirical.

[2]In Richards' study, he asked his students at Cambridge University--most of whom were undergraduate English Honors Students, some non-English majors, a few graduates, some non-academic types, with virtually equal numbers of men and women (p. 4)--to write comments on unidentified poems. He provided the students with no clues to the authorship, period, school, or literary value of the poems. The results of his study were startling to the literary community because the students found it very difficult to make up their minds about the poems or even work out options from which to choose. See also the following comparatively recent studis that utilized Richards' research design: Walter D. Loban, *Literature and Social Sensitivity* (Champaign, IL: NCTE, 1954); James R. Squire, *The Responses of Adolescents While Reading Four Short Stories* (Champagn, IL: NCTE Research Report No. 2, 1964); James R. Wilson, *Responses of College Freshmen to Three Novels* (Champaign, IL: NCTE Research Report No. 7, 1966).

familiar, concrete, and imageable, but which were none-the-less difficult to understand or remember.

In this article, Bauso laments that studies in literature are still focused on the product, "that is, on having understood the assignment, with little attention to the process of how the student is to read with understanding" (p. 2). She contends that one way of broadening the focus to include processing is to take into consideration "the role of the reader's prior knowledge, that is, the ways in which the knowledge readers bring to a text affects what they take away from it" (p. 2).

Bauso illustrates how this could be done by supplying several short passages and showing how the reader always needs a prior context to make meaning out of what he or she reads. The conclusion she comes to is that pre-reading activities provide the context for literature students to make sense out of their reading, in much the same way as pre-writing has provided composition courses the avenue for writing well.

Bauso recommends that the less skilled readers are, the more important it is that they have an overview before they start reading. She explains that in order to incorporate this overview concept in classroom practice, the "traditional" allocation of class time needs to be revamped. "Instead of making an assignment at the end of the period and then spending the whole of the next class working with what students have attempted to read at home, teachers should spend as much time working with an assignment before students read it as after" (p. 10).

Results from Bauso's experiments show that pre-reading activities usually attract more student participation than do post-reading activities in that they do not threaten to reveal a student's poor reading skills. Also, students have an immediate

reason to pay attention and take notes, since the notes will be of help when they (students) do their assignments that night. Bauso concludes that she has found that her pre-reading approach "frees them [students] at least somewhat from attending to the details of what they are reading and enables them to devote more attention to dealing with higher-level matters such as making inferences" (p. 12). She vouches that when teachers adopt this practice of preparing students to read, the students will read with more understanding, and class discussion will be on a higher level.

Sonjai Chaibunruang's (1987) survey study was aimed at discovering problems in the selection and teaching of novels in English and American literature courses at the college level in an EFL program in Thailand. Study participants were instructors who taught novels in English and American literature courses in all teachers' colleges.

Chairbunruang used a questionnaire which consisted of both close-ended and open-ended questions to gather his data. The results of the study reveal that the most important consideration for a majority of the teachers in selecting novels ranged from the availability of books to the length and cost of the books. The study also identifies the problems in the teaching of novels, the first three of which are: the students' insufficient backgrounds in English and reading abilities; the students' negative attitudes towards literature; and their limited awareness of English and American cultures.

Gloria Wetzel (1990) conducted a quantitative study, the results of which bear somewhat on the current investigation. The purpose of his study, entitled, *The Effect of "Writing to Learn" on Literature Comprehension in English Literature*, was to discover if using writing to learn would improve reading comprehension in literature.

Two groups of thirty junior girls were separated into a writing treatment group and a group receiving a comparison approach in analyzing Biblical Literature. The treatment group received writing tasks to improve their reading comprehension of literature. The second group received discussion, short answer methods. The activities of the two groups were reversed.

The research determined a significant improvement in the group treated with the writing method. Higher scores in the reading test indicated an advantage of the writing method over the traditional method. Bruce suggests that because the results were significant, educators should consider using writing as a technique in learning content area literature.

In addition to these literature-related studies, several ethnographic studies about the English classroom have been conducted. Key among these are Sherry D. Ralston's (1982) *Learning to Teach: An Ethnography of Student Teachers' Perspectives*; Claire A. Woods-Elliott's (1982) *Students, Teachers and Writing: An Ehnography of Interactions in Literacy*, and Martha C. Cummings' (1988) *What We Talk About When We Talk About Writing*. Most of those studies center on the writing classroom.

Bruce Closser's (1988) research design is similar to the one used in the present study. He examined instructional procedures in four college composition classes and concluded that research paper instruction shares characteristics of other rites of passage.

As interesting and helpful as these studies about the English classroom are, scholars still seem to know very little about what goes on in the mind of the literature teacher as he or she prepares for class, the trend of teachers' thought processes as they

teach, or the insights they get about the subject after a class is over. Neither do researchers seem to know much about the mind-set students bring to the study of literature. And because neither students nor teachers have any examples of descriptions of their separate but related experiences in studying and teaching literature available to them for examination, there seems to be little common ground for dialogue about what goes on in the literature classroom and therefore littleunderstanding of the processes involved. Therefore, a study designed to describe the actual process of acquiring literary competence is needed.

Rationale of the Study

There is a definite need to understand what students go through when they study literature because presently researchers seem to know very little about the processes involved. Literature has a broad universal appeal. It is literature's claim to universality and non-specialization that has been used as a justification for requiring all undergraduates to take a course in literature. It is often suggested that literature brings to the student a special knowledge that transcends major, class, race, or gender and helps to humanize in ways that few subjects can. If in fact this is true, and on this basis college and university students are often required to take at least one literature course before they graduate, it seems important that both students and teachers of literature should understand the acculturation process. For those students who are interested in becoming English (literature) professionals, it is even more critical to understand the procedures involved in attaining the requisite proficiency in literature. Such knowledge or awareness could help students make such decisions as to whether or not they really want to be English majors.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to describe the context of an undergraduate literature class in order to clarify the process through which literature students acquire the competencies that help make them literature literate.

This study will arrive at descriptions of the literary backgrounds and expectations the students bring to the literary text as well as the classroom, and the extent to which their expectations and prior assumptions about literature change or are modified (if in fact they change and are modified) as a result of the interaction that takes place in the classroom.

As a corollary, this study will also investigate the assumptions literature teachers bring to their teaching. For example, what literary and philosophical assumptions underlie the selection of a reading list for a course in literature? Is the basis for the selection the teacher's personal preference, or is it from a "canon" sanctioned by professional colleagues, or is the reading list influenced by what were on the teachers' lists when they were students, or a combination of these or other reasons?

In addition, what are the perceptions the teachers have of their roles in the student's acculturation processes? What about literature should the students know or do to indicate that they are literarily literate? Another element of the process this study intends to investigate from both the students and the teacher is how they approach the text. What teaching methods do the teachers' employ in any particular teaching situation and why?

Finally, this study will investigate the ways students are evaluated for literature competency and how that process relates to their acculturation. In other words,

what do teachers test for in literature examinations, and how do these test items relate to the overall objectives the literature program intends to achieve?

Definition of Terms

It may be useful, here, to indicate the scope and definition of some of the terms used in this investigation.

Literary acculturation means the adoption and subsequent identification of the students with the world-view of the literature community and understandings of literature.

The term Deconstruction or Post-structuralism is used variously by a number of recent theorists in a wide variety of disciplines. In the simplest sense, the word is used to suggest the realm of what is not: not visible, not present, not said. It is also intended to suggest the "non-reality" of language and the fact that words are not things or actions or ideas, that the very act of language is a distortion of the things that we might wish to communicate, or share, or be aware of. Conversely, a linguistic act can sometimes create a kind of reality which may be dealt with by an individual, a group, or by a whole society as if it were part of the physical or historical world.

Reader-Oriented Criticism refers to those discussions of the reader as occupying the vital and crucial place in arriving at the meaning and value of a literary work. These theories investigate what is involved in the act of reading, what part inference (rather than implication and intention) plays in understanding a literary work, and how the act of reading, in fact, is what gives the work its only or main life or being.

By New Criticism is meant the related theories developed in the 1930s and 1940s by such artists I. A. Richards, John Crowe Ransom, Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren, William Simpson, Allan Tate, and others who emphasized the literary text as

a linguistic object and whose critical procedures could be classed as a kind of explication of the text.

Feminist Criticism can be considered as a kind of reader-oriented approach to the reading of literature when the reader is conscious of his/her own gender and reacts to feelings and actions in a manner that at least partially relies on that continuing self identity. It is also an approach which relies heavily on the historical setting of the work--its voice, story, and attitudes--as they relate to the place of women in society, and concepts and reactions that exemplify the changing roles and changing consciousness of readers in a culture.

Structuralism indicates a method of inquiry. Its related theoretical approach, semiotics, deals with a method of systematically investigating sign patterns. The term "structuralism" is used to describe an approach to linguistic analysis which separates and deciphers the "systems" at work in a text: grammatical, phonological, metaphorical, etc.

The term literary Text as used in this paper refers to the ink stains upon paper forming any literary work of art. The most important characteristic of such a work is that it remains the same from one moment to another.

CHAPTER II

FIVE INFLUENTIAL LITERARY THEORIES

Since the turn of the century, there have been a proliferation of literary theories that have influenced how and what is taught as literature in the American college classroom. Since it is reasonable to assume that the literature teacher's conception of literature drives, or at the very least, influences his or her pedagogical approaches in the classroom, the relevant question then is, what literary theories have applications in the classroom today? One way of discovering what literary theories have been applied by English professionals in the last decade or so is to study what has been published on the subject in *College English*[1], by far the most widely read classroom-oriented journal for college English educators in the United States. A review of *College English* enables one to be able to understand some of the impact of the proponents of literary theories of the past decade on the teaching of literature.

This review was limited to the first five years of the 1980s. There were several reasons for this limitation. First, such an approach allowed for a limited scope,

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[1]*College English* focuses on research, mostly as it relates to pedagogical applications. *Publication of Modern Language Association* is unquestionably the premier journal for English studies, but unlike *College English*, it concentrates on research articles that have no explicit classroom application.

which in turn enabled one to do more detailed analyses of the articles appearing in *College English*. A second, and probably more important reason for this limitation, had to do with the structure of this research project. One of the things investigated in this study was whether, and to what extent, the teachers involved in the project applied their graduate school experiences, primarily as they relate to pedagogical orientations, in their own classrooms. Since one of the teachers observed in the study is a recent graduate school graduate, using 1985 as the cut-off point for the review helped to accomplish this objective since the bulk of his graduate study coursework was completed by the end of 1985. Third (and this is of marginal significance), the early 1980s were the period of my undergraduate and graduate studies in English. I was curious to compare my recollective experiences of this period with what the English professionals were reading at the time in *College English* to discover if there was any correlation between classroom practice in my setting then and what was being discussed in the journals.

As Table 1 indicates, from 1981 to 1985 some 223 articles were presented in *College English*. Of this number, only 50 dealt with some aspect of the teaching of literature.[1] It may be surprising to many that only a little over 20% of the articles in *College English* were focused on the teaching of literature. However, even a cursory reading of *College English* shows that this low ratio is indicative of the fact that a great deal of professional interest during this time period was devoted to other matters--most notably, process composition, writing across the curriculum, and the integration of

[1]Included in my literature count are three reviews of critical applications or critical works, and my count itself is possibly inexact since I have chosen to treat those reviews more as articles because the reviewers were obviously pressing forward their own theories and biases.

technical writing into the English curriculum (see Table 2). These topics showed up with greater frequency in the *College English* articles I reviewed than did articles on the teaching of literature, which, until recently, has generally been considered the very staple of most programs in English departments and the research of the English faculty. As Table 2 demonstrates, only 20 of the 50 articles clearly reflected the authors' theoretical bias.

TABLE 1

ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN *College English* 1981-1985

Year	No. of Articles	Lit. Related	Miscellaneous
1981	55	12 (22%)	43 (78%)
1982	53	9 (17%)	44 (83%)
1983	44	8 (18%)	36 (72%)
1984	34	12 (35%)	22 (65%)
1985	37	9 (24%)	28 (76%)
Totals	223	50 (22%)	173 (78%)

This study concentrated on the five critical theories that appeared to dominate in these 20 articles, as far as classroom application is concerned--that is, the theoretical and pedagogical discussion among English professionals. These approaches are New Criticism, Structuralism, Deconstruction or Post-Structuralism, Feminist Criticism, and Reader-Oriented Criticism. The section on each theory begins with a summary of articles from *College English*, followed by more detailed definitions and discussion drawn from more widely based literature reviews.

TABLE 2

BREAKDOWN OF LITERATURE-RELATED ARTICLES
PUBLISHED IN *College English* 1981-1985
BY THEORETICAL SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

Year	No. of Articles	S[1]	D[2]	F[3]	RO[4]
1981	12	-	-	2	-
1982	9	-	-	1	2
1983	8	1	-	1	2
1984	12	-	1	2	5
1985	9	1	-	1	1
Totals	50	2	1	7	10

[1]Structuralism, [2]Deconstruction, [3]Feminist Criticism,
[4]Reader-Oriented Criticism

New Criticism

Of the five theories to be discussed in this chapter (the only one without an article directly espousing or applying the theory in *College English*) is New Criticism. However, New Criticism has been one of the most influential 20th century critical approaches to classroom practice in the United States, and its lingering influence can be noticed in the several specific references (i.e., Harris, 1983, p. 562; Gopen, 1982, p. 334) made to this theory in some of the articles reviewed, a practice which suggests that New Criticism, though not necessarily current in the literature, is still of major theoretical and practical consideration and therefore deserves some definition.

To illustrate this point, in 1984 an article by George D. Gopen, "Rhyme and Reason" linking literary study and the discipline of law, was published in *College English*. Gopen's thesis in this article, is that since no undergraduate major is like law

school "in little" and that law schools actually "only" teach students to think like lawyers by employing the Socratic method, the best major for a pre-law student is, obviously, one that focuses on teaching students to read and write critically. And that major is to be found in English departments (pp. 333-334).

But almost immediately, Gopen reveals his own training and pedagogical bias when he asks, "How many ways can a text have meaning?" Then he shows how literary study trains students to concentrate on "the effects of ambiguity of individual words and phrases" (p. 334), and that the discipline of literature concentrates more than any other on "the concepts of contextuality" (p. 334). It is then no surprise when he comments--with a certain amount of innocence, it seems to me--"This essay limits itself to the formalistic techniques of teaching poetry that grew out of New Criticism" (p. 334). His introductory remarks include another comment of interest:

> [This essay] leaves aside other traditional methods of interpretation (historical, psychological, etc.), which do not so often produce the kinds of mental activities described . . . and it does not consider recent literary criticisms, like post-structuralism, which have yet to make their way into undergraduate pedagogy. (p. 334)

As recently as 1984, then, the premise that literary study in America was based on New Criticism was strong. What is this New Criticism that still has lingering classroom influence? In the late 1930s, a literary movement that came to be known as formalism or New Criticism was introduced to American literary thought. The main tenants of this critical school of thought stressed that literature should be valued without reference to the reader, the society, or to time. This view championed the notion that the text of the literary work had a world of its own. The proponents of this critical theory contended in effect that all the information about the work was within it. Terence

Hawks (1977) captured the essence of New Criticism insightfully in the statement below:

> The work of art, [New Criticism] proposed, and in particular the work of literary art, should be regarded as autonomous, and so should not be judged by reference to criteria or considerations beyond itself. It warrants nothing less than careful examination in and on its own terms. A poem consists, less of a series of referential and verifiable statements about the "real" world beyond it, than of the presentation and sophisticated organization of a set of complex experiences in a verbal form. The critics' quarry is that complexity. It yields itself to close analytic reading without overt reference to any acknowledged "method" or "system" and without drawing on any corpus of information, biographical, social, psychological or historical, outside the work. (p. 152)

Probably Serge Dubrovsky (cited in Harris, p. 154) said it best concerning New Criticism: "Where 'literary history' means authors without works, 'New Criticism' has tended to mean works without authors."

Gerald Graff (1987), the eminent literary historian from the University of Chicago, indicates that it is possible to fix 1937-41 as the turning point for the birth and consolidation of New Criticism in particular, and criticism in general, especially in the university (152). This period saw the introduction of some of the main champions of New Criticism to the American literary scene.

In 1938, Robert Penn Warren and Cleanth Brooks published their *Understanding Poetry*, a textbook that quickly became the standard fare of the practical approach to undergraduate teaching in literature. *Understanding Poetry* was an unswerving devotion to those principles that the New Criticism construed as a complete program for rescuing the teaching of literature from the bonds of "non-literary" concerns--seen mainly as historical context and authorial biography and intention.

Understanding Poetry begins with a lengthy "Letter to the Teacher." Within the first paragraph of this letter we find a statement of the text's basic objections to other kinds of poetry study, which are termed "substitutes" for teaching poetry. These are:

paraphrase, study of historical and biographical materials, and inspirational or didactic interpretation. The poem, the authors declare, must be grasped "as a literary construct," (p. x) and a satisfactory method of teaching poetry can only be one which (1) emphasizes the poem as poem, (2) treats poems concretely and inductively, and (3) thinks of the poem as "an organic system of relationships" (p. xv).

Throughout the book, teachers and students are told exactly how to view and evaluate a poem as an object, and to deny the importance of biography and intention.

The Well-Wrought Urn (1947) was in many ways crucial to New Critical practice because several of the poems that Brooks discusses are given model explications. And it was these exercises in textual analysis that formed the focus for American literary study throughout the 1950s.

Arguably the most influential advocates of New Criticism were William Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, both former professors of English and Philosophy respectively at Yale. In 1946, the two professors published an article entitled "The Intentional Fallacy" (cited in Lodge, 1977) and followed it up in 1949 with "The Affective Fallacy" (cited in Lodge, 1977). These two articles became the manifesto for the ideals of New Criticism. Their basic argument in these articles was that, in criticism, attention should be focused upon the meaning of the work itself, undistracted by inquiries into its origins in personal experience or effects on particular individuals. As Wimsatt and Beardsley emphasized in "The Intentional Fallacy":

> Judging a poem is like judging a pudding or a machine. One demands that it works. It is only because an artifact works that we infer the intention of an artificer. A poem should not mean but be. A poem can be only through its meaning--since its medium is words--yet it is, simply is, in the sense that we have no excuse for inquiring what part is intended or meant. (p. 335)

Again they insist:

> The poem is not the critic's own and not the author's (it is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend about it and control it.) The poem belongs to the public. It is embodied in language, the peculiar possession of the public, and it is about the human being, an object of public knowledge. What is said about the poem is subject to the same scrutiny as any statement in linguistics or in the general science of psychology. (p. 335)

In the main, the essays of Wimsatt and Beardsley (in particular the two essays alluded to) constitute the most uncompromising theoretical statement of the New Critical position, and for at least two decades were instrumental in the influence the New Critics exerted on the American critical scene. Although Wimsatt and Beardsley never claimed that literature could be divorced from life, their preoccupation with the text marked a new trend of reading, characterized by its emphasis on minute linguistic details and verbal nuances.

Two other writers that approached literature from its technical aspects and are generally credited with making important contributions to New Critical thought were R. P. Blackmur and Allan Tate. Blackmur, like Brooks before him, denounced the then prevailing popular practice of emphasizing external matter in literary criticism. In his theoretical essays collected in "Form and Value in Modern Poetry" (1957), he continually de-emphasized such considerations as authors' intentions, readers' feelings, time, place, or circumstance of composition. He saw the poem as distinctly separate. The existence of the poem or piece of literary work was and should be, he argued, its own reality.

Tate saw things similarly. The knowledge that resides within a poem, said Tate, is non-, even anti-, scientific, historical, or biographical. The knowledge of poetry, in essence, according to Tate, is, in fact, poems. In "Literature as Knowledge,"

Allan Tate appealed to the New Critics: "We must return to, we must never leave, the poem itself" (cited in Adams, 1971, p. 941).

Many critics have advanced the notion that during the 1940s and 1950s, studies in English had a limited scope. Graff (1987) suggests that this narrowness was a direct influence of the end of the second World War. The theory postulated that in the mid and late 1940s, American colleges and universities were filled to overflowing with returning military men from the war in Europe. These men were financed by the generous provisions of the G.I. Educational Bill. Just when departments throughout universities were strained to the limits, a carefully focused theoretical approach to reading was very welcome. This approach, Graff contends, required a limited amount of previous scholarly or historical knowledge. It was not only easy to provide materials for, it also required small research libraries. So, theorizes Graff, New Criticism was just what literary education needed. It appeared at the right time at the right place. Every student had access to "correct" readings, and every student started at the same culturally blank place in reading literature.

The major works that advanced New Critical theory can be seen as a direct reaction against decades of literary study predicated on varying historically-based views of literature, under the influence of which, works were approached by investigating the social and intellectual environment of their comparison and/or of the era therein depicted. Historical criticism sought both verisimilitude and the external causes. Against this kind of reading, New Critics took a strong stand. Historical criticism provided, they contested, a focus outside of literature, encouraged a judgment which saw "truth" based

on relationships to external factors, and admitted no immediate standards by which the text could be preferred above the paraphrase.

The other main target of New Criticism's war against the past was the Romantic view of literature that stressed personality, idiosyncracy, and individual "genius" as the basis for evaluating works of literature. The "cult of personality," like historical criticism, pulled attention away from the work itself and looked instead at its source or the supposed intention of the writer or the biographical events that surrounded the work's creation. For the New Critics, the text exists and has its own complete, separate wholeness; and if it has to be read at all, is worthy of a reading totally separate from its source. Poems are not vehicles for ideas, the New Critics assert, but the poem is its idea.

But even Brooks and Warren concede in their "Letter to the Teacher" that "the process of criticism is a never-ending process" (p. xxiii). In the third edition of *Understanding Poetry* (1960), they observe that the poets' and the reader's interests and knowledge and--to some extent--the context of the poem can be useful information in reading and understanding poetry. The further validity of such qualified assumptions was amply borne out by the concurrent and subsequent development of several quite different bodies of critical approaches, several of which we will investigate in the next sections, beginning with the theory of structuralism.

Structuralism

As the analysis of the literature-oriented articles in *College English* published from 1981 to 1985 shows, two essays had some bearing on structuralist theory--one directly and the other indirectly. The indirect one (indirect in the sense that it uses a lot

of structuralist language but does not specifically address the notion of Structuralism) was authored by Wendell V. Harris and appeared in October 1983. In "Contemporary Criticism and the Return of the Zeno," Harris offers probably the best overview and the most philosophical discussion among the relevant essays found in the *College English* articles reviewed. He contrasts two groups of philosophical approaches: those whom he considers to be the disciples of Zeno and those who follow the teaching of Heraclitus. These two clusters of theorists differ in that the former focuses on paradox and the latter on the possibilities of mediation. Says Harris, "An enormous amount of contemporary criticism is built on paradox" (p. 560). In this group are Nietzche, Freud, Marx, Wilde, the New Critics, and the philosophy of science (citing the ideas of Thomas Kuhn). He continues: "Each of the first three found ways of using contradiction, paradox, or circularity as a defense of his own system" (p. 562). The remaining three he finds to be more disparate "though in each case paradox has been a significant source of the interest they have attracted" (p. 562).

Harris discusses these theories as they have been used by the critics, not necessarily by teachers of literature. He mentions the basic tenets of Saussurian linguists because they serve such a germinal role in modern philosophy. "The Saussurian view of signs," he points out, "as gaining meaning only from their relationship to other signs could be interpreted as setting meaning adrift on a semiotic sea that nowhere washes the shores of reality" (p. 563). The most important result is that the point of closure was changed in analysis. Instead of "works," critics were employed in a discussion of "texts" (p. 563). The New Critics were still apt to use "works," which suggests "human agency intending at least a coherent artifact." "'Text' is meant to imply openness but signals in

fact a structure which has shut out, closed off, not only authorial intention but the usual process of interaction by which words do delimit each other as to make determinate meaning at least probable" (pp. 563-564).

What characterizes the other great side of criticism for Wendell Harris is its ability to discover and employ the concepts of mediation, set forth in Plato's *Symposium*. Harris says the followers of Zeno (the Eleatics) championed the view that "the multiplicity of things and their motion or change are illusions . . . that all about which language is able to discourse is illusory" (p. 564).

The Hericliteans, on the other hand, would "presumably have been at ease with contemporary critics who believe that the mind is able to impose on our daily experience of change (or becoming) and communicate it through language" (p. 565). Harris groups with this later philosophy a variety of critical methods: "the setting up of corrigible schemata (E. D. Hirsch), or alternation of illusion-making and illusion-breaking (Wolfgang Iser), or the interplay between defamiliarization and recuperation (as in Russian formalist theory)" (p. 565).

In the final section of his essay, Wendell Harris comments briefly on his preference for the Hericlitean view of convention. His point is that only through this philosophical stance can one see that "literature depends on being able to both use [conventions] and break them" (p. 566). Literary works depend on conventions shared by writers and readers, by implications and inferences. "The total structure of readerly expectations is very much like Hericlitus' river, and it is only because that is true that the description of it at a frozen moment is of interest" (p. 566). The value of mediation, Harris concludes, is basic. It separates "logical and absolute identity from practical

identity. Of course one cannot step in the same river twice, but the person and the river can continue to be called by the same name no matter how many times he or she steps in" (p. 568).

The second[1] of the two articles on structuralism in *College English* addresses, more directly, structuralist concerns in literature. This article appears in the December 1985 issue, written by Lynette McGrath. Her "Structural and Poetic Theory: Intention, Meaning and Privilege" states as its goal: "to examine the difficulties of applying structural theory to poetry" (p. 809). She concedes that "language theory" has de-hallowed and de-privileged the literary object, but that poetry is especially resistant to such work by structuralists and deconstructuralists. McGrath points out that many current practices are looked on with fear in the "groves of academe" because they abandon the "work" in favor of the "text" and such objectification of literature removes all that is human in literature, all that is subjective (p. 809). Considerable antagonism has arisen between "traditional" and recent criticism, she notices, because these new

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[1]There is a third article written by Robert Scholes ("Is there a Fish in This Text?," October 1984) whose relevance to structuralism is probably very marginal if not non existent, but is worth citing because the article suggests that structuralist discussions in *College English* should be familiar to the journal's readership.

In the article, Robert Scholes uses the famous anecdote of Agassiz, the student, and the fish as a basis for offering teachers of writing a mode of teaching. He demonstrates his wit by paraphrasing a famous title by Stanley Fish. Scholes' article is "Is There a Fish in This Text?" (November 1984). His main point is to show how the lessons exhibited in the fish story (used by Ezra Pound in his *The ABC of Reading*, 1984) can be incorporated into a method of teaching composition. As such, the article is not particularly relevant to this study, but it does show that there is an underlying assumption in Scholes' joke that his fellow readers of *College English* are familiar, not only with Ezra Pound's anecdote, but also with Stanley Fish's work, *Is There a Text in This Class?* If so, it is obvious that readers of professional English journals are expected to know Scholes, an early proponent of the uses of structuration in reading literature, to know Fish and his concepts of reading and the construction of meaning, and to appreciate that post-New Critical theories are familiar enough to be the basis of a little humor.

approaches no longer place literature in a privileged position among writings (p. 810). She points out that the frequently asked question in the English or American classroom, "What does this poem mean?" is "inconsequential." The structuralist needs to ask, "What structural system enables the signs in this poem to relate to each other?" (p. 810).

McGrath argues persuasively for viewing poetry as an elitist activity--both the writing and the reading of poems--since language must be viewed and used in special ways. The language is always, she claims, different from that of ordinary discourse; the conventions must always be learned, and the activities of poets, readers, and critics have "depended on an implicit agreement to follow a set of complex, privileged conventions which are neither intrinsic to the nature of a poem nor essential to it" (p. 819).

Finally, McGrath points out that attempts to define or successfully establish valuative judgments about the quality of poems have failed because of the unwillingness of critics to acknowledge the arbitrariness of conventions. The structuralists do "provide the appropriate response. Aesthetic judgments are simply descriptions; they are not judgments at all. A poem is judged good when it conforms to the expectations of its audience, when it most fully abides by the conventions established for poetry" (p. 829). Since criticism is self-privileged, it must acknowledge its own status in order to "exercise prudently its power to extend or withhold closure of the whole poetic process" (p. 823).

Structuralism, as mirrored in these *College English* articles, refers to various critical activities primarily based on modern linguistic theory. One of the basic premises in structuralism, according to T. S. Eliot (1960), is that "the world is made up of relationships rather than things" (p. 8). The consequence of underscoring relationships, rather than things, entails the primacy of the relationship over an entity; an entity or

experience cannot be perceived unless its relationship with other entities or experiences of the same class or structure has been established.

Following the Aristotelian tradition, structuralists insist that literature should be studied as a body of knowledge, and must be divided into parts, sections and subdivisions--that is structures. In effect, they treat literature as an entity divisible into smaller units (plots, characters, and so forth).

The most influential work of structuralism in the English- speaking world is, without argument, Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). In this book Frye contends that there are two basic views of literature that run throughout the history of literary criticism.

> These two views are the aesthetic and the creative, Aristotelian and the Longinian, the view of literature as product and the view of literature as process. For Aristotle, the poem is a lecture or aesthetic artifact: he is, as a critic, mainly interested in the more objective forms, and his central conception is catharsis. (p. 66)

As Frye sees it, catharsis is a liberation of individuals from the particular experience that the work of art raises in them to a wider realm of reality, from private and personal worries to wider concerns. Consequently, Frye considers the feeling of catharsis as rebirth not of a new person but the rebirth of a new outlook that liberates the individual from mundane concerns and leads to an intellectually independent life.

One of the first applications of structural principles to literature was that performed by Vladimir Propp (1968), who analyzed a hundred Russian fairy tales in an attempt to categorize common plot elements (i.e., "The History of the Problem" and "The Method and Material" in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*). The details of his work need not be recounted, but he did demonstrate the systematic recurrence of

elements. As a result, he could set up a scheme of incidents and predict the chronological appearance of certain acts and functions in the whole set of folk stories. The discovery of patterns was one of the obvious results of Propp's analysis. Later, Jonathan Culler (1975) was to observe in *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature*,

> Linguistics provides an algorithm for exhaustive and unbiased description of a text and . . . this algorithm of linguistic description constitutes a discovery procedure for poetic patterns in that if followed correctly it will yield an account of the patterns which are objectively present in the text. These patterns will surprise the analyst himself. (p. 57)

One of the most provocative and influential applications of literary structuralism was the work *S/Z* by Roland Barthes. The book was published in 1970 in France and appeared four years later in an English edition. The work was originally presented as a series of seminars over a two-year period, 1968-69, at the Ecole Practique des Hautes Etudes. In the dedication to the American edition was a clue to the process undertaken by Barthes. In dedicating the book to his "students, auditors, and friends in the seminar," Barthes says: [It is] "a text which was written according to their attention to it." His work is an attempt to reveal what humans are doing when they read, what they expect, what conventions set up those expectations, and what in the structure of the text satisfies, fails to satisfy, or expands those conventions and expectations. In the "preface" to the English edition of *S/Z*, Richard Howard remarks:

> Literature is the love in La Rochefoucauld: no one would ever have experienced it if he had not first read about it in books. We require an education in literature as in the sentiments in order to discover what we assumed . . . was nature is in fact culture, that what was given is no more than a way of taking. (p. ix)

In the explicative process Barthes undertakes with a tale by Balzac, he establishes a method, a set of premises about structuralist applications, and a personal

mode of digressive commentary. For this application, Roland Barthes used *Sarrasine* by Honore de Balzac. He then proceeded to dissect the text of the story into 561 numbered fragments or "lexias." From these he demonstrated that five "codes" of meaning could be determined: hermeneutic, semantic, proairetic, cultural, and symbolic. These codes determined and formed the structure of meaning in the story and, by extension, in all stories. But as Howard points out, it is not the disclosure of these codes that made Barthes' *S/Z* such a startling new approach to literary analysis, but it was the digressions, the "divagations" in which Barthes considers what it means to read a text and what it means to read the structure of a text. Howard continues,

> These divagations, taken together, as they interrupt and are generated by the lexias of the analyzed text, constitute the most sustained yet pulverized mediation on reading I know in all of Western critical literature . . . [They provide a] convinced, euphoric, even . . . militant critique of what it is we do when we read. (p. x)

Barthes states that he intended in his critique to "star" the original text and then separate it into parts, "separating, in the manner of a minor earthquake, the blocks of signification of which reading grasps only the smooth surface" (p. 13). Barthes also points out that "the single text is valid for all the texts of literature, not in that it represents them . . . but in that literature itself is never anything but a single text: the one text is not an . . . access to a model, but entrance into a network with a thousand entrances" (p. 18). To

> study [the] text down to the last detail is to take up the structural analysis of narrative where it has been left now: at the major structures; it is to assume the power . . . of working back along the threads of meanings, of abandoning no site of the signifier without endeavoring to ascertain the code or codes of which this is perhaps the starting point. (p. 12)

But Barthes also admits that some of the fragmenting of the text, the seeking

for codes--as much as their discovery--is a matter of convention, a process that is in some ways predetermined by the reader. He writes,

> The text "in its mass, is comparable to a sky, at once flat and smooth, deep, without edges and without landmarks; like the soothsayer drawing on it with the top of his staff an imaginary rectangle wherein to consult, according to certain principles, the flight of birds, the commentator traces through the text certain zones of reading, in order to observe therein the migration of meanings, the outcropping of codes, the passage of citation. (p. 14)

In his *Literary Theory*, Terry Eagleton (1983) observes, structuralism has a "distinctive doctrine;" that is, "the belief that the individual units of any system have meaning only by virtue of their relations to one another" (p. 94). In literary criticism, a person becomes "a card-carrying structuralist," he continues, "only when you claim that the meaning of each image is wholly a matter of its relation to the other" (p. 94).

Robert Scholes (1974), in *Structuralism in Literature*, uses quite a different tone in support of structuralism in literary study. He writes,

> Structuralism may claim a privileged place in literary study because it seeks to establish a model of the system of literature itself as the external reference for the individual works it considers. By moving from the study of language to the study of literature and seeking to define the principles of structuration that operate not only through individual works but through the relationships among works over the whole field of literature, structuralism has tried . . . to establish for literary studies a basis that is as scientific as possible. . . . At the heart of the idea of structuralism is the idea of systems: a complete, self-regulating entity that adapts to new conditions by transforming its features while retaining its systematic structure. (p. 10)

Later in the same book, Scholes becomes more specific in his remarks:

> A poem [for example] does mean things. It is a message as well as an object--a multiple of duplicitous messages but a message nonetheless. . . . Meaning is never simply folded into a work . . . so that it can then be folded . . . by a technician of language processes. Meaning is a continued shuttling back and forth between the language of the work and a network of contexts which are not in the work but are essential for its realization. (p. 147)

"For structuralism," Scholes adds, "the problem of reading a text involves

finding satisfactory ways of incorporating the semantic dimension within the consideration of structure" (p. 147).

Structuralism as an approach to literary analysis has been seriously questioned. Robert Con Davis (1986) observes: "Structuralism's strength as an analytical technique . . . was connected to what many conceive to be its major weakness" (p. 296). Structuralism is an "activity" of reconstructing an "object" in such a way as to manifest its rules of functioning. Thus, Davis continues, "structuralism focused on the synchronic dimension . . . of a text, the specific ways in which a text is like other texts" (p. 297). And, he concedes, "structuralism's achievement in practical criticism is undeniable" (p. 297). "He points out,

> structuralism is focused on the fixity of relations within synchronic paradigms at the expense of temporality, or the "diachronic" dimension, which involves history. This tendency to avoid dealing with time and social change concerned many critics of structuralism from its beginning and ultimately became a main target of deconstruction's critique of the movement. (p. 297)

Three forces that, very early in its inception, moved critical interests away from structuralism were: (1) the focus on general systems rather than individual instances, (2) lack of interest in the diachronic aspects of systems, and (3) the increasing fascination of several of the original structuralist thinkers with the ideas of "difference" and with the unfilled places in the structured paradigm. It is from this last area, perhaps, that some of the most fruitful considerations for literary study grew. The movement that is called Deconstructionism began more and more to focus its attention on what is not stated in the structure, or movement through time, and on the particularity that the first works on structuralism had by-passed or discounted.

Post-Structuralism/Deconstructionism

From 1981 to 1985, only one article appeared in *College English* concerning the critical theory known as Deconstructionism or Post-Structuralism. It was a lengthy review by William E. Cain entitled "Deconstruction: An Assessment" (December 1984) surveying four of the best works in print on the theory of Deconstructionism. The four critics whose deconstructionist works he reviewed were Douglas Atkins (*Reading Deconstruction/Deconstructive Reading*), Christopher Norris (*Deconstruction: Theory and Practice*), Vincent B. Leitch (*Deconstructive Criticism: An Advanced Introduction*), and Jonathan Culler (*On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism After Structuralism*).

Cain begins the review by conceding that even though deconstruction "still irritates many literary scholars and teachers," it "no longer scares or angers them" the way it did in the early 1970s. He argues that deconstruction has survived and even succeeded largely, in part, because of "the aura that emanates from the word itself, a word that connotes a testy importance with what is in place and a brisk determination to dismantle old structures from top to bottom" (pp. 811-812). The theory, he adds, has "obvious" and important affinities with New Criticism in practice and theory, but he calls deconstruction "bold" and "innovative," even "radical, arming its advocates with new insights into the figurative power of language and the endless intersections, mergings, and crossings that define the word of texts" (p. 812). Like New Criticism, Cain suggests, "deconstruction fosters a patient, rigorous attentiveness to linguistic detail", but unlike New Criticism, deconstruction searches for "gaps or fissures in the text that expose its instability and indeterminacy" (p. 812).

Cain hopes that the books covered in the review essay will enable critics and

proponents alike to access deconstruction in particular, and to examine "significant errors" that plague criticism and theory in general.

Of Atkins' *Reading Deconstruction*, Cain has this characterization:

> What happens here [in the book] is a twist and turn of rhetoric that distorts arguments and forestalls debate before it can get underway. It a stylistic habit that crops up often in deconstructive criticism and theory. . . . First an authority is introduced whose arguments are unquestioned and exempted from criticism; next a straw-man is invented--self-satisfied, narrow-minded, and easily upset--who is then dismissed as a coward or dolt; and then the conclusion implies or states that the commentator has proved something when in fact he or she is reiterating the point with which the argument began and which he or she never challenged. (p. 814)

Cains is equally uncomplimentary to Norris, whom he accuses of evading "sharp inquiry into the oeuvre of his eminent authorities" (p. 816). Rather than putting the implications of deconstruction in the foreground, for the general state of the discipline, Cain chides Norris for appearing to "see his role as the defender of specialized interest, a 'field' that exemplars should rule and that mediocrities should not endanger" (p. 816). Cain is not as dismissive of Leitch as he seems to be of Norris and Atkins. He refers to Leitch's *Deconstructive Criticism* as "substantial and meticulous" his "range of reference daunting" (p. 816). "At his best", Cain observes of Leitch, "he succeeds in evoking the tone and spirit of the deconstructive program, particularly its buoyant hostility to long-held humanist pieties" and represents well "the excited, even gleeful form of Derrida's revelations" (p. 816). Yet while Cain allows Leitch a breadth and expert grasp of contemporary theory, he states that *Deconstructive Criticism* suffers from what he calls "a certain insularity," a shortcoming which he observes is evident "in a slight but significant manner in Leitch's frequent use of the word 'public'" (p. 817).

Cain reserves his best appreciation for Jonathan Culler's *On Deconstruction*,

calling it the "best, most authoritative account of its subject" (p. 818), because of its "concise summaries of terms, issues, and theoretical positions." But as is characteristic of Cain, he finds some shortcomings with Culler's approach. For example, he accuses Culler of sometimes evading "difficult questions in the guise of answering them and thereby protects Derrida from stalwart opposition" (p. 820).

Throughout the review of these books, Cain demonstrates that these authors have shown convincingly that deconstruction is a powerful form of textual analysis, but more than that, he also shows that probably the best value of deconstruction is that it "kindles steady, repeated suspicion about traditional categories--literary and non-literary, canonical and non-canonical--to which the institution of criticism adheres" (p. 820).

Although both of the terms Post-Structuralism and Deconstructionism are used somewhat interchangeably, Deconstructionism may be thought of as denoting an area of philosophical speculation that developed mainly among French academics and which, like structuralism, had its beginnings outside the realm of literary considerations. According to several summaries of the concepts usually covered by the two terms, Post-Structuralism is more consistently used in the United States and England to label those critical approaches that grew directly out of, but tangential to, the kind of structuralism formulated by Jonathan Culler in his *Structuralist Poetics*. While deconstruction usually means the particular work of Jacques Derrida and his intellectual associates, "Post-Structuralism" is used to refer to several critical approaches, including some kinds of reading theory.

From the outset, Deconstructionism was not a "literary" movement as such. According to Robert Con Davis (1986), the term itself was the coinage of Jacques

Derrida "in response to the philosopher Martin Heidegger's idea of 'destructive' analysis" (p. 409). Davis goes on to remark of Derrida's decisive influence, "[he] noted that traditional embodiments of legitimate authority are generally taken to be self-evident in their absolute 'rightness'. [And] . . . furthermore . . . in the West authority is conceived as existing in a structure and is thought to be the precise center" (p. 409). Jacques Derrida articulated this notion in a paper he delivered at the Johns Hopkins seminar in 1966. In "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (cited in *The Structuralist Controversy*, pp. 247-248), he noted that the center of any structure is unique, and since it is its structure's organizing principle, it is necessarily outside the structure. The center of any structure, "constituted that very thing within a structure which governs the structure, while escaping structurality" (p. 248).

The genesis of modern thought for Derrida, and others, is a process of decentering, by searching for the underlying authority of the center. All the grounds of knowledge are thereby undercut. It is one of the conditions of "modern thought" according to Robert Con Davis (1986), "to know and not know something at the same time," to know that knowing is unknowable (p. 410).

When deconstructionists talk of the theory's applicability to literary discussion, they talk of strategy. The "strategies" of deconstruction involve the reversals of common alternatives: for example, good and bad, male and female, health and disease. As Davis summarizes, there tends to be a "traditional valuation of the first term over the second" in Western culture (p. 410). Deridda's strategy is first to reverse the items in a kind of intellectual "vandalism," since such a reversal disrupts all the traditional values and explanations based on hierarchies. The second part of Derrida's strategy is to insert the

newly reduced term back into the newly privileged category. Thus, maleness, for example, is "reinscribed" as a special instance of woman and seriousness as a subcategory of play. In so doing, Derrida is himself playing in a serious way.

In 1966, an international conference at Johns Hopkins brought together many of the most noted theorists in the general area of Structuralism and its detractors (just beginning to term themselves Deconstructionalists). In the collected papers of that conference (published as *The Structuralist Controversy*), Lucien Goldmann, a director of the Ecole Practique des Haute Etudes in Brussels, provides a definition of "structure" that is useful to considerations of both structuralism and deconstruction. He says:

> Structure is essentially denied by the necessity to fulfill a function in a certain situation. History is constituted by the fact that, in the changing situation created by the action of the structure and by exterior interventions, structures, which have been developed as being rational and having a chance to fulfill their functions to allow a group or an individual to live in conditions that existed previously, are no longer rational, and must be modified to fulfill their function. (p. 100)

Every structure, he continues, "fulfills a function within a larger structure" (p. 100). The importance of Goldmann's observation is that he shows that the inevitable course of structuralism led it to Deconstructionism. The verification of that notion is essentially what that "early" conference at Johns Hopkins produced. Structuralists were trying to perfect a method of analysis. But as the analytical process developed, it became something else.

In response to Nicolas Pinwet's "Linguistics and Poetics" (cited in Macksey,R. & Donato, E., 1970), Peter Caws (1986) of Hunter College admits,

> I think that many of us came to this colloquium hoping to find in Structuralism the possibility of a methodological unity for what has come to be called in France 'les sciences humaines.' Here, however, we found that what has become primary in nearly all the discussions has been a metaphysical rather than a methodological question" (p. 314).

The question, Caws points out, concerns the relation of the subject to language. Language, he summarizes, "in a creative sense, is posterior to the subject" (p. 314). And, he concludes, that is the idea that "possibly metaphysics itself has been a product of our language" (p. 314).

Language and linguistics have been of primary importance in modern philosophy, and, not surprisingly, the related precepts of rhetoric and dialectic have also been crucial topics in a vast arena of critical considerations. Several of the theorists among the deconstruction group have wrestled with the issues surrounding such problems. Foremost are some of the American critics like Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, and Geoffrey Hartman. As Shirley F. Staton (1987) points out, these three are concerned with the text as self-reflexive and with the relationships between thought and rhetoric or thought and language. They have been, in different ways, interested in the ways the texts' own "rhetorical strategies disclose . . . gaps where the text begins to undo itself" (p. 390). These three critics are also leaders among those who still champion the necessity of dealing with literature as a privileged branch of discourse, even while claiming not to.

For example, William Cain (1984) in *The Crisis in Criticism*, concludes, in a chapter on the criticism of J. Hillis Miller, that although "Miller usually argues that the text performs its own interpretation . . . his insistence on the critic's deliberate 'procedure' and 'strategy' towards the text undercuts this claim" (p. 42).

> Miller's deconstruction stance not only privileges "literature" but also reifies the literary canon as it now stands. Deconstruction does not give us a radically new literary history. . . . Though deconstruction provides "new" terms with which to praise Wordsworth's "greatness," it does not call into question this "greatness" or attempt to alter the current literary rankings--despite the fact that Miller refers to the aim of deconstruction as the reversal of hierarchies. (p. 43)

On the other hand, Joseph Riddell (1982) of UCLA in "Decentering the Image" suggests that there are neither privileged texts nor pre-texts, and comments: "A privileged pre-text does not rule the system; nor are 'archives' relegated to a place of sacred significance, of archeological fragments from which one can remount the stream of history . . . What is meaningful is the play of signs" (p. 177). Every poem is a movement away from all the past poems, Riddell says, and as a result no poem is "more poetic" or more important than another. "Present poems do not absorb old texts, but take movement, a kind of spacing, from then. Documents decenter the lyrical voice, the centering or narrative subject" (p. 184).

Another American critic concerned with the discovery of codes and dis-coding, with reading and misreading is Harold Bloom. Bloom's works include *Agon: Towards a Theory of Revisionism* (1982) in which he explores the necessity of revising people's view and "reading" of the world. That process, he argues, has been the subject of all poetry "since the Greeks." He submits:

> The origins and aims of poetry together constitute its powers, and the powers of poetry, however they relate to or affect the world, rise out of a loving conflict with previous poetry, rather than out of conflict with the world. There is, despite such contemporary criticism, a referential aspect to a poem, which keeps it from coming into being only as a text, or rather keeps a text from being merely a text. But this referential aspect is both masked and mediated, and the agent of concealment and of relationship always is another poem. (p. viii)

For Bloom, the literary text is not only privileged but an interrelated part of the "structure" of all literature. Harold Bloom advocates methods of reading that recall some

of the precepts of deconstructionists, but he is unwilling to carry them so far as to deconstruct his own activity or the special nature of his academic interests.

Yet, it seems that there are in Bloom's work, if not marriage, a strong flirtation with Deconstructionism. Here are two examples from *Agon*. His chapter on "Catastrophe Creation: Gnosis, Kabbalah, and Blake" cites the relationships between Blake's myths of creation and the speculations found in the Kabbalah, both of which explore the meaning of the nothingness out of which creation was manifested. The focus, both in Blake and the Kabbalah, Bloom maintains, is on the other side of creation, on the chaos and nothingness of pre-creation. And in investigating these correspondences, Bloom refers to and makes use of the threads of meaning that reside in the places where creation and chaos meet. In a second essay in *Argon*, "Freud's Concepts of Defense and the Poetic Will," one must be struck by Bloom's acknowledgement of Lacan's "superb breakthrough" in the statement: "What one looks at is what cannot be seen" (p. 126).

In *Deconstruction and Criticism* (1979), Harold Bloom discusses the special nature of poetry. "Poems instruct me," he says, "in how they break form to bring about meaning" (p. 1). A poem, he continues, can only be "about" the "skill or faculty of invention or discovery." Elsewhere in the same essay, he calls attention to the fact that the "authentic poem now achieves its dearth of meaning by strategies of exclusion, or what can be called litanies of evasion" (p. 15).

An appropriate conclusion to this section on Deconstructionism and to some of the critics and theorists who have written out of that philosophical approach to reading, to literary study, and to teaching strategies--is the work of Barbara Johnson

(1980), especially her strategies linked to deconstructive criticism. Johnson, a professor of French at Harvard, has been instrumental as a translator and interpreter in bringing French deconstructive theory to the United States. A few remarks from her work *The Critical Reference* illustrate her own critical explorations. She has been particularly interested in the applications of Deconstructionism to the criticism of literature. She says

> Literature . . . is the discourse most preoccupied with the unknown, . . . The 'unknown' is not what lies beyond the limits of knowledge, some unreachable, sacred, ineffable point toward which we vainly yearn. It lies, rather, in the oversights and slip-ups that structure our lives. (p. xii)

Literature helps us understand, she contends, why not knowing what is not known "spins out and entangles" our lives. The obscurity which literature help reveal, she writes in a later chapter, "is not encountered on the way to intelligibility, like an obstacle, but rather lies beyond it, as what prevents the reader from being satisfied with his own reading" (p. 68).

In an essay in *Writing and Reading Differently* (cited in Atkins, G. Douglas, A. and Johnson, M. L., 1985), Barbara Johnson offers a useful definition of Deconstruction as it relates to criticism and to teaching. Her essay, entitled "Teaching Deconstructively (pp. 115-128)," begins, "Teaching literature is teaching how to read . . . how to read what the language is doing, not guess what the author was thinking" (p. 140). She then points out that "deconstruction is a reading strategy that carefully follows both the meanings and the suspensions and displacements of meaning in a text, while humanism is a strategy to stop reading when the text stops saying what it ought to have said" (p. 140). "Meaning," she cautions, "is not something 'out there' or 'in there', to run after or dig up. It inhabits the very activity of the search" (p. 145). Reading, for

Jackson, ought to be the focus of a course in literature, and not just the subjects of reading, but the subject and process of reading.

Deconstruction begins with the linguistic theory that meaning resides only in differences and has struggled to decide just what those differences are and to what extent the notion of difference itself may be nothing more than an attempt to separate meaning from itself. If the reader is the writer is the reader, if the critic is the creator and the deconstructor, if the poem resides in all text and all experience and responds only to other incidents called poems, then the contention of Jacques Derrida that his processes are games and play may save deconstructive criticism from the absurdity that "common sense" might claim.

Feminist Criticism

Several literature-oriented articles in the *College English* survey had feminist critical leanings. At least one article was published in *College English* each of the five years under review dealing with some aspect of Feminist Criticism. In April 1981, Judith Spector published "Gender Studies: New Directions for Feminist Criticism" in which she voices her displeasure about the present direction of feminist studies, claiming that it is "profoundly separatist and elitist" (p. 377). She cautions that if Feminist Criticism is to be other than self-limiting, the feminist writers and critics should "speak to our male counterparts, even to our antagonists" (p. 374). The problem, as she sees it, is that feminist writers "have been talking about history instead of facing the '80s and the changes which this decade may bring to contemporary fiction, to feminist criticism, to women's studies, and to academe" (p. 374). Part of her argument is that feminist

critics must also continue to select for studies those women writers who deal with issues which are particularly relevant to women.

This cannot be done effectively by separating into specialized programs. It can be done well, she contends, by including works by women writers within traditional curricula, and even better, by pointing out attitudes toward gender within traditional works of literature. When this is done, she believes, it may well be that "both women and men will expand the definition of feminist criticism to something more in line with what life is really like--a consciousness of the role which gender plays for both men and women" (p. 376).

She attempts to distinguish between women's studies, which she views as narrowly defined and too self-limiting, and gender studies, which is broader and more accommodating, and advocates that Feminist Criticism should shift from a women's studies base to an all-inclusive gender studies base. "There is a great difference between sexual and sexist study," she reminds us, "and the acute scholar, critic, and teacher must be prepared to see that women's studies is a vital part, but only a part, of gender studies" (p. 378).

Karen Keener's "Out of the Archives and Into the Academy: Opportunities for Research and Publication in Lesbian Literatures" (1982), which assesses the difficulties and opportunities encountered by those interested in research and publication in lesbian literature, is followed the next year by Elizabeth Flynn's (1983) "Gender and Reading," the essay which preceded her book-length work of the same title. In this article she provides some useful definitions. The relationships between gender and reading, she points out, are best investigated by combining "reading research that

examines the behavior of elementary and high school students" and the work done in the past decade by "feminist literary criticism that analyzes literary texts from the reader-oriented perspective" (p. 236).

Since reading is an interaction between a "self" and an "other," the relationships formed in that interaction are crucial. She offers, also, this idea: "Comprehension is attained when the reader achieves a balance between empathy and judgment by maintaining a balance of detachment and involvement" (p. 239). Flynn concludes her detailed report of response differences between college men and women to the reading of three short stories by pointing out some differences between men and women in speaking situations and how such research may be useful in understanding "gender and reading." "We may find," she concludes, "that women are considerably more confident and competent readers then they are speakers" (p. 251).

After citing research by Robin Lakoff and Pamela Fishman on the behavior of women in communication settings, Flynn ends with this comment: "Reading is a silent, private activity and so perhaps affords women a degree of protection not present when they speak. . . . A willingness to listen, a sensitivity to emotional nuance, an ability to empathize with and yet judge, may be disadvantages in speech but advantages in reading" (p. 252).

Another of the *College English* articles' having feminist literary theory is Marianne Whelchel's "Transforming the Canon with Non-Traditional Literature by Women" (1984).

Marianne Whelchel's thesis is that non-traditional literature (defined as letters, journals, diaries, autobiographies, oral testimonies) exhibits a literary parallel to, "our

mothers' gardens and quilts" (p. 587). She suggests that teaching non-canonical forms might enhance students' understanding of thematic and formal literary matters. She concentrates on non-traditional literature by women "because this literature has most often been omitted from our courses and because in it--especially when we include oral interviews--we hear voices that would otherwise go unheard" (p. 588). One of the things Whelchel's does very well in this paper is her suggestion and description of several published non-traditional texts appropriate for inclusion in literature courses, showing how they fill curricular gaps in terms of the voices and experience they make available.

She also describes her own experience in teaching one of these texts, *The Maimie Papers*. Finally, through discussion of her students' original projects, she shows both that students can uncover important material and that as they edit it they become more sophisticated critical readers than they would have become if they had studied only published texts, traditional and non-traditional.

Anne Dalke's "The House-Band: The Education of Men in *Little Women*," published in October 1985, is a re-interpretation of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. She seems to suggest that Alcott believed that males stood to be "saved" through the power of motherly love. Anne Dalke points out that in *Little Women*, as the male characters enter the family, "they are successively remolded on the female mode," and that the family which incorporates them is not dead, but "thriving, growing, and ever more influential" (p. 577). By thus re-making men on a female pattern, by granting men admission to female activities, and by teaching them the values of nurturance, Ann Dalke reiterates, men were "remade" on a female pattern.

A variety of contemporary social, political, as well as critical issues has led

to the development of feminist literary theory as illustrated in the articles cited above. The feminist approach owes much to the rise of social and economic feminism and to the appearance of more and more women students and scholars in graduate schools and among faculty in many colleges and universities, resulting in the inclusion of new and newly accepted ways of reading and judging literature by and about women--and also literature by and about men.

Elaine Showalter (1986) points out that one of the most important concerns of Feminist Criticism is to see the impact of woman-as-reader on the study and criticism of literature. Showalter is concerned with "woman as the consumer to male-produced literature, and with the way in which the hypothesis of a female reader changes our apprehension of a given text, awakening us to the significance of its sexual codes" (p. 170). This area of criticism she terms "the feminist critique" and indicates that it is "a historically grounded inquiry which probes the ideological assumptions of literary phenomena. Its subjects include the images and stereotypes of women in literature, the omissions and misconceptions about women in criticism, and the fissures in male-constructed literary history." She adds that "It is also concerned with the exploitation and manipulation of the female audience, especially in popular culture and film and with the analysis of woman-as-sign in semiotic system" (p. 170).

The political component of feminist criticism is apparent because of the association of the critical concerns with the more general concerns of the feminist movement. This movement, to a large extent, is what made the critical approaches possible and acceptable. In *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* (1979), Wilfred Guerin, having pointed out the interrelatedness of "various protest moments" of

the 1960s and 1970s, notes that "the particular aspect of concern [in these movements] is the shared belief that something in American consciousness has not been right and that a reorienting of what is said to be white, middle-America, male thing is necessary to correct it" (p. 245). The most important of these

> from a literary point of view, is what has come to be called feminist criticism. Although the traditional view may be that good literary criticism is sexless, the feminist critic argues that if it is to be valid at all, a literary criticism that claims universality must include feminine consciousness. (p. 245)

Guerin goes on to summarize: "Some argue that feminist criticism must be primarily political and social in its orientation"; others believe that the best criticism will eventually be "androgynous," and other feminist critics believe that since earlier criticism was "male-dominated," it must be "redone to include the feminine consciousness, even, if necessary, to the extent of reshaping systems of values" (pp. 245-246). They conclude by pointing out that although the New Critics claimed to be objective, feminist critics find such claims "specious and inadequate whenever they fail to pay heed to the social context" (p. 248).

Terry Eagleton (1983), an avowed political critic and generally considered to be a Marxist, lists Feminist Criticism in his *Literary Theory: An Introduction* as a branch of political criticism. In a general discussion of criticism's responsibility to create "better people," he questions what is involved in creating a "better person." The means, he indicates, must be "concrete and practical--that is to say, concerned with people's political situations as a whole--rather than narrowly abstract" (p. 238). He argues that politics is a way of taking morality seriously. But, he admits, "there is no way of settling the question of which politics is preferable in literary critical terms" (p. 209).

The feminist critic, he continues,

> is not studying representations of gender simply because she believes that this will further her political ends. She also believes that gender and sexuality are central themes in literature and other sorts of discourse, and that any critical account which suppresses them is seriously defective. (p. 209)

In the conclusion to his book, Eagleton notes that:

> It is the nature of feminist politics that signs and images, written and dramatized experience, should be of especial significance. Discourse in all its forms is an obvious concern for feminists, either as places where women's oppression can be deciphered, or as places where it can be challenged. (p. 215)

The issue of gender, itself, is not a topic of interest in some of the writings of Feminist Criticism. In the area of languages, of course, gender-linked terms have been the topic of discussion for a number of years. Various publishing organizations, for example, have issued guides to reduce the use of gender-based terms: the universal or so-called generic "he" to mean anybody of either sex, for example. But beyond items of vocabulary, some feminist critics believe that literary language especially has developed a male bias.

In an article on gender interests in "Reading and Language," David Bleich (1986) reports on interpretation studies done with four men and four women student readers. He concludes that there are very real differences in the way the students read and in the ways that they recount narratives. While he admits that eight instances "portraying a gender difference" are "not enough to be understood as definitive . . . it is not likely that chance alone is responsible for these differences" (p. 255). "What we do have," he continues, "is preliminary indication of a possibly deep difference in the perception of language according to gender" (p. 255).

Sandra M. Gilbert's "Literary Paternity" (cited in Davis, 1986) deals

specifically with the gender bias of literary studies. In this essay she explores the whole notion of the male as creator. Citing the writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Edward Said, the Earl of Rochester, Auguste Renoi, Ben Jonson, and D. H. Lawrence (among others), she reiterates the widely prevailing notion of the alliance between pen and penis. Men have power; women do not--such is the simple message of her collections of opinions. As the medieval world is engendered by God the Father, so is all creation ultimately male. Women, by definition, are excluded from all participation in "making" but are, instead, the receptacle and passive partner or subject of creation. Imbedded in the notion of "paternity" is also possession, Gilbert points out.

> For if the author/father is owner of his text and of his reader's attention, he is also, by extension, owner/possessor of the subjects of his text; that is to say of those figures, scenes and events--those brain children--he has both incarnated in black and white and 'bound' in cloth or leather. (p. 191)

Women writers and readers are denied a kind of reality, suggests Gilbert, as "if the male generative power is not just the only legitimate power but the only power there is?" (p. 191). In a letter to R. W. Dixon, Hopkins epitomizes the masculine belief that literacy on the part of women was a presumptuous act. The artist's "most essential quality," he says, "is masterly execution, which is a kind of male gift, and especially marks off men from women, the begetting of one's thought on paper" (Gilbert, p. 189). "The male quality is the creative gift," he concludes. It is essentially this precept that Hopkins voices in his poem "Red Beauty" which concludes, "He fathers forth/whose beauty is past change/Praise Him." God the Father/Creator is the model for the gender-basis of creativity. In fact, as Gilbert points out, all "patriarchal mythology defines women as created by, from, and for men, the children of male brains, ribs, and

ingenuity" (p. 194). And women were thus effectively cut off by society, politics, and religion from any sort of creative power.

In an article in the "New York Times Book Review", Alicia Ostriker (March 9, 1986) points out that her literary education consisted of a chronological survey of men poets ("American Poetry, Now Shaped by Women"). "That was literary history as my professors taught it--and it became my own history. . . . Needless to say, I read few women poets." "The women poets who could not be ignored," she continues, "could be subtly diminished." Ostriker quotes R. P. Blackmur, who wrote of Emily Dickinson that "she was neither a professional poet nor an amateur; she was a private poet who wrote indefatigably as some women cook or knit. Her gift for words and the cultural predicament of her time drove her to poetry instead of antimassars." This, concludes Ostriker, "is a bit like saying that Ezra Pound wrote the 'Cantos' as indefatigably as some men work on any assembly line and that his gift for words and his cultural predicament drove him to poetry instead of bowling." But the stance that women poets are necessarily inferior poets has begun to change, as Ostriker notes, "The belief that true poetry is genderless--which is a disguised form of believing that true poetry is masculine--fails to recognize that writers necessarily articulate gendered experience just as they necessarily articulate the spirit of a nationality, an age, a language" (p. I:28).

Feminist Criticism and the power of recent women writers have, Ostriker believes, begun a new literary movement. Criticism both evaluates and creates a climate for literature. And current American women poets, Ostriker says, "constitute a literary movement comparable to Romanticism or modernism . . . and their work is destined not only to enter the mainstream but to change the stream's future course" (p. I:28).

The increasing popularity and publication of women writers may change the definitions of the literary canon. In the meantime, much influential theory and practice continue to divide the work of women writers from the central focus of literary education. As more of the concerns of Feminist Criticism make their way into university classrooms, the elimination of a literary approach that ignores half of human consciousness and experience may be in sight.

Reader-Oriented Criticism

Among the recent theoretical "schools," the interest in the nature and a process of reading has attracted the most attention--if the publication decisions of *College English* are a reliable indication. Between 1982 and 1985, 10 articles appeared that dealt with some aspect of reading theory, the most of all the literature-oriented articles published over the five-year period. Four of the articles show the strong and related interests in "process" as it applies to both reading and writing. Of these four, three are summarized here. In the April 1982 issue of *College English*, one article appeared by Russel A. Hunt, "Toward a Process--Intervention Model in Literature Teaching". In this article, Hunt reminds his readers that what we may in the past have expected reading to be (i.e., a "passive process of decoding the marks on the page"), is instead apt to be considered now--that is after the introduction of new theories of reading--a process that is almost exactly opposite. Instead, readers use "information and inferences drawn from knowledge . . . and from whatever portion of the text has already been read at any given point" (p. 345). As a result, it is very important that students in literature classes be more and more conscious of how they are reading. The concern of such beginning classes should not be on "meaning" nor on the other topics of classroom discussion that

lead to generalizations and observations about the content of the literary work. Hunt insists that such a course should focus not on discussing and writing about literature, but rather on teaching students "to experience and value it" (p. 347). Consequently, he calls on teachers to "intervene" in their students' reading processes, so that they all become more aware of the experience of the actual reading. Only then--when reading is slowed down and talked about--can the real business of the literary classroom take place.

Hunt makes two specific suggestions about practical means of intervention: (1) to read literature aloud, and (2) to give students copies of works with key words replaced by blanks so that discussion can take place about what the reader expects, what the reader would insert in each blanks, and what kinds of difference such substitutions make when compared with the terms actually used by the author (pp. 351-353).

He also demonstrates that a similar effect can be achieved by the teacher's rearrangement of syntactical elements to spur a discussion of expecting and various means for satisfying those expectations (p. 354). Russell Hunt suggests in his article that all kinds of reading require the same act of expectations and skills. He disagrees with one of the main ideas of Louise Rosenblatt (1978) who contended that "efferent" and "aesthetic" reading differed.[1] Hunt concludes, as he began, with the assertion that teaching literature should focus not on interpretation and evaluation, but "back toward the [reading] process which takes place" (p. 355).

In another article on the process of reading which appeared in *College English*

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[1]Rosenblatt defined an "efferent" reading as one focused on the information to be "carried away." In an "aesthetic reading," on the other hand, "the reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text" (pp. 24-25).

for September 1983, Louis G. Ceci discusses his reading theories in "The Case for Syntactic Imagery". Ceci defines this term as "the perception of shifts of meaning, the movement of time, and the changes in perspective and or in the organization of experience" (p. 432). He further comments that language scholars have long considered the mind capable of reconstructing areas of meaning that lie in the "deep structures" of syntax and that even critics before Chomski were interested in the impact of grammatical structure on "poetic effects" (p. 433). Ceci takes issue with Stanley Fish for rejecting "most grammatical approaches to the study of syntax in literature" (p. 434) and believes that students will read anything better if they are consciously aware of the stages of a communication process. He employs a four-part process, attributed to Albert Schutz, which briefly consists of (1) "prephenomenal experiencing," (2) "paraphrase" into the available linguistic elements, (3) selection of "a symbolic representation for public utterance," and (4) the "actual utterance" (p. 437). Ceci shows how he might apply his ideas to the reading of poetry, and limits its application to the understanding of "extraordinary syntax" and, therefore, to poems that he believes pose special difficulties (pp. 443-446).

The third article on process reading is by Thomas Newkirk whose "Looking for Trouble: A Way to Unmask Our Readings" appeared in *College English* in December 1984. His article is a plea for more honesty in the literature classroom. He contends that most teachers, because they come to class well prepared to discuss the literature they have assigned to their students, "mask" their own reading processes and reinforce the idea in the students that literature has "hidden meanings." Newkirk suggests that, "If students never see instructors confused, never see them puzzled by a

particular usage, never see how an interpretation is revised in subsequent readings" (p. 757), they will never be able to construct their own ideas about how understanding develops. The rest of Newkirk's article describes a classroom technique of having students keep journals in which they describe first, second, and subsequent readings of a piece of literature. In so doing, they can "unmask" the notion they may previously have held that some magic situation, unavailable to them, "inspired" good readers and handed over "correct" readings.

During the five-year period under review, two other articles in *College English* presented overviews of reading theory. The first of these, "A Theory of Talking About Theories of Reading," is by James Hoetker (February 1982). It is perhaps more a personal essay than a professional article, but in it he discusses his own sense of inferiority because he is an expert on "education." As a result, he felt defensive when he saw that while educational research had made great strides in learning about the phenomenon of reading, critical theorists have only discovered "reading" in the past 20 or 50 years. He is especially disturbed that the work of Louise Rosenblatt was so long ignored by recent scholars of reading theory. He opines that such a situation developed because Rosenblatt chose to leave an English department and to "associate with another breed, those most concerned with questions of pedagogy" (p. 177).

James Hoetker concludes his article with the admission that he realizes that while critical theorists have things to learn from reading experts (such as mapping, predicting, anticipating, and correcting), those experts also have much to learn from those who do research with successful readers, with adult readers, and with those who move beyond the "mere" skills of reading. Having reached this personal equilibrium, he ends his essay

with this suggestion: "The greatest immediate contribution reader-response critics could make to an understanding of reading . . . is in the competent phrasing of researchable questions about critical and aesthetic reading processes" (p. 180). Only then, says Hoetker, can "studies of reading . . . use methods congenial to humanistic scholars" (pp. 180-181).

The second article which presents an overview of general importance in the application of reading theories is by Robert de Beaugrande. His "Writer, Reader, Critic: Comparing Critical Theories in Discourse," was published in *College English* in October 1984. This work is more a review and expansion of some recent theories than it is an application of theory. His opening paragraph integrates his own ideas of "discourse processing" with the work of others interested in advancing "principles for reading, experiencing, and interpreting literary art works at large" (p. 533).

Robert de Beaugrande establishes the scope of his study by giving a general definition of what he means by discourse processing. "Discourse is meaningful and reliable," he says, "not because words are defined somewhere in a dictionary or because people are born with predicate logic in their brains, but because discourse participants steadily collate and negotiate their processing results" (p. 534). And "while there are no laws or strict rules for processing a text, we certainly are not free to do whatever we like. As an experience the text must somehow be accounted for. We want--as textual perceivers--to account for the experience of the text. Most communication takes place somewhere between obviousness and surprise" (p. 534).

de Beaugrande further suggests that discourse processing can help define "literature" because a literary work often contains what might be called "deviant"

features; he further hints that such deviance may be any "distinctive individual touch of style" (p. 535). But the main thrust of his article is to apply his own theory of "discourse processing" to the theories of these other critics in order to demonstrate that in processing those theories, he can propose a more effective mode of reading. The three theorists he takes on are E. D. Hirsch, Stanley Fish, and J. Hillis Miller. But while his article is a useful review of these three theories, an attempt to summarize the rest of his article would be largely marginal considering the central purpose of this chapter, because de Beaugrande does not offer any practical applications for his theory and teaching.

Another article that appeared in *College English* between 1981 and 1985 deserves a passing mention. It is concerned, to some degree, with the relationships between the study of literature and other disciplines, studies, skills. The article, "Reading and Writing a Text: Correlations Between Reading and Writing Patterns" (November 1983), opens with a quotation from Louise Rosenblatt's *The Reader, The Text, the Poem*. The author of the article, Mariolina Salvatori, points out the complexities of reading, citing additional material from Louise Rosenblatt and Wolfgang Iser. She demonstrates that many writers, wishing to show relationships between reading and writing, suggest that an ability to analyze their own writing raises students' conscious abilities to read carefully. Salvatori says that her research shows that "the improvements in writers' ability to manipulate syntactic structures . . . is the result, rather than the cause, of their increased ability to engage in, and to be reflexive about, the reading of highly complex texts" (p. 659). The problem she sees is how to improve student writing.

Two other articles deserve comment: (1) Robert F. Bergstrom's "Discovery

of Meaning: Development of Formal Thought in the Teaching of Literature" (December 1983) and (2) (September 1984) "Carlos Reads a Poem," by Eugene R. Kintgen and Normal N. Holland (September 1984). Bergstrom's essay is one of the very few in this survey that actually uses the phrase "the teaching of literature" in its title. Bergstrom credits the genesis of his article to some ideas that appeared in a previous *College English* article by Russell A. Hunt, "Toward a Process-Intervention Model in Literature Teaching" (1982) (see above discussion). Bergstrom admires Hunt's approach because "it tends to make students aware of points in the text at which dislocations, seeming contradictions, nexes of style and content occur" (p. 745). The method his essay develops is one that applies only to the teaching of fiction. It consists of applying formal systems of thought to works of literature. He concludes, after a short discussion of some of Jean Piaget's theories on the nature of thinking (p. 746): "The individual using formal reasoning patterns can apply to objects of thought such schemes as combinational and proportional thinking, correlational and probabilistic reasoning conservation beyond the realm of physical objects, and control of variables" (p. 747). The application of his precepts to just one novel can be discussed.

> [His] students failed to understand [the novel] not from a lack of intelligence or inexperience but because they lacked the mental structures which the novel demands of a successful reader. . . . The teacher's task is not to put a book into the students' heads but to help them develop the mental tools which will enable them to assimilate the work. (p. 748)

Bergstrom's strategy calls for groups of students, working without intervention from him, to categorize the characters in *The Great Gatsby* into as many groups as possible, using as wide a variety of traits as they wished: physical, emotional, intellectual, personality. He found in using this approach

> several times with totally predictable results . . . [that] without fail, the class as a whole generates every major theme of the book through its labelling of groups of characters. Thus the students themselves name the patterns of thought and emotion that Fitzgerald employs in the novel without my having to say a word on the subject. (p. 750)

Such a procedure, Bergstrom asserts, helps make novels more accessible to students when confronted by a work "which operates by its own internal rules of order and movement" (p. 755).

The article by Eugene Kintgen and Norman Holland, "Carlos Reads a Poem," is one of the very few specific applications of post-New Critical theory to the teaching of poetry to appear in *College English* between 1981-1985. These men are both widely known as literary theorists and have published extensively in the area of reading research. In this article, they describe a process of determining in great psychological detail just who a reader is before they try to draw conclusions about how he or she reads. They are interested in testing the ideas that any person's reading consists of aspects shared with other readers and aspects that are unique to the individual. Their subject reader (Carlos) described on tape the steps of reading and understanding a poem. Then the reader was given a personality test devised by Holland. The classroom is used as a laboratory; the work of the "scientist" is not used for the class room. Kintgen and Holland remain interested in reading research, not in reading poems. They know much of what Carlos shares and does not share with other students in their idealized classroom.

The main intention of the research repeated by Kintgen and Holland was to discover how much that is unique to the individual reader is brought to a reading session and how much each reader shares with all the other readers of a particular text. In order to achieve the goal, Holland had devised his personality test in order to determine what

concepts, strategies, and combinations of interests were special to each reader. Reading poems and verbalizing the process is very complicated. Readers must have some knowledge of many aspects of human experience. Kintgen and Holland concluded, however, that even if the knowledge is different, "the skills and operations a reader uses may be limited in number" (p. 484). In the personality test devised by Holland, his reader "Carlos" demonstrated a need "to be active, dominating, distinguishing, and distinguished" (p. 490). Carlos carried these qualities over into the reading of individual poems. He "sought progressions. He wanted the poem to be moving, fulfilling, accomplishing, achieving--like himself" (p. 490).

Whereas at the beginning of the experiment Holland and Kintgen saw both communal and personal aspects present in the acts of reading, when the research project ended they perceived that readers use "communal resources to fulfill personal aims" (p. 490). They concluded that "the tools we use both enlarge and limit the way we can interact with reality" (p. 491). Kintgen and Holland propose in this article that knowing more about readers will tell us more about how they read and why they read the way they do. "The more we interpret a reader," they say, "the more we can appreciate the patterned idiosyncrasy in all interpretive activities. . . . We can find our diverse ways to a teaching, both more open and more profound, and to a deepening of mutual understanding on which humane discussion builds" (p. 491).

The last of the Reader-Oriented articles in *College English* appeared in December 1985 and was written by Kathleen McCormick. In her "Theory in the Reader: Bleich, Holland, and Beyond," McCormick actually demonstrates most of the Reader-Oriented methods as they might be applied in the literature classroom. She gives many

examples from the teaching both of fiction and poetry. McCormick sets out first to point out what she sees as some shortcomings in other recent discussions of methodology. She disagrees with Bleich's uses of response statements because he focuses on the students' lives, not on the literature or the students' "explorations of literary texts" (p. 836). When she summarizes the research of Kintgen and Holland, she also believes they do not show how students are influenced by what they read, but rather Kintgen and Holland are interested only in the "role of the student" in reading, and it is essentially "a passive one" (p. 836).

The rest of the paper is devoted to showing how she provides her students with explicit directions for their responses. She summarizes,

> My experience is that different kinds of response statements, focusing on issues from cultural, historical, phenomenological, and structuralist approaches to reading texts, can be assigned to bring into the student's awareness both the knowledge of and the need for more demanding kinds of information and hence, can make students stronger, more informed and self-conscious readers of literature. (p. 837)

She is deliberate in her use of the term "literature" for, as she points out, the works assigned to most undergraduates are traditional literary texts. She hopes, she says, "that reader responses can be redeemed from banality if the teacher gives them focus" (p. 837).

McCormick incorporates in her directed responses questions that enable students to become aware of their own historical and cultural ideas, their understanding of literary and linguistic conventions, their abilities to evaluate secondary sources, or be aware of their own expectations and to what extent they are thwarted or satisfied by a particular work. She asks students to interpret works by becoming increasingly aware of their era, their gender, their life in a family. She directs them, for example, in

reading Petrarchan and Elizabethan love sonnets to comment on whether they like or dislike them. She directs,

> In trying to explain your reactions explore:
> 1. The historical/cultural differences between the 1980s and the time in which the poetry was written.
> 2. The role your gender plays in your liking/disliking the poetry.
> 3. The way you react to the language, metaphors, and sexual attitudes of the poems.
> 4. Do any of the metaphors or attitudes in these poems seem familiar to you? If so, from what contemporary sources? If anything seems familiar, does this contribute to your like or disliking the poetry? (p. 839)

Kathleen McCormick admits that one of the most interesting outcomes of these directed-reading response exercises is the opportunity for in-class discussions of the things that guide us in our reading. She encourages students to respond "on a personal level" (p. 840). As a result, students are able to explore the sources of their own conventions, both conscious and unconscious. Her students in the control group, for example, learned that they expected poems to display "originality." Another outcome was the increased awareness by her students in just where they presume "the meaning" in literature resides.

One of McCormick's students wrote: "Everyone writing [that is other students] seems to think they're getting a certain meaning out of the text when actually they're getting it out of their own repertoire of knowledge" (p. 842). This leads, as McCormick points out, naturally to such questions as whether or not the text constrains the production of meaning, and thus the process raises questions about whether or not "one can distinguish between correct and incorrect interpretations" (p. 842). When students can raise such issues themselves, there is no need for teacher lectures.

The value of this approach, McCormick concludes, is that students become

aware of at least three essential areas of literary knowledge: themselves as readers, the strengths and limitations of the literary works they read, and the critical approaches available to them as readers of literature. She wants to make her students "powerful readers of texts" and even though she might be criticized for directing them too closely to her own interests, she says, "I see nothing wrong with providing one more influence on them" (p. 848).

> A reader-centered course that stresses theoretical and critical issues about interpretation directs students' reading habits away from traditional New Critical styles with which many of them are most comfortable, such as talking about the theme and meaning of a text, toward more interesting issues of the readability of texts, the influence of culture, history, gender, and discourse on reading experiences. (p. 848)

McCormick concludes with a comment of real importance:

> In the past twenty years, literary theory has achieved a recognized, if not sometimes feared, place in our curricula. What has rarely happened is its transition into pedagogy. That process is necessary if theory is to become more than elitist speculation. If the questions theory raises are important, they must have consequences in praxis. (p. 849)

The above review of Reader-Oriented theory in the pages of *College English* becomes more meaningful when tied to the following background explanation of this literary approach. Although New Critical theory probably has been the main theoretical and pedagogical point of emphasis in college literature classrooms in the United States since the 1930s, this fact did not preclude others from exploring other approaches to the reading and study of literature during the same period. Among the several methods that gained ground was a theoretical approach that made the reader or the audience the focus for understanding what works of literature are. This interest in the receiving aspects of literature is variously termed Subjectivism, Phenomenological Approach, Receptive Theory, Affective Response. But the term that has gained the widest acceptance for this

type of literary approach is Reader-Response. Whatever the name, all these approaches share a common concern for the problems of what happens and how it happens when a person reads.

As recently as 1979, Guerin's *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* did not include any discussion of a critical theory that focused on the reader. Even in 1987, "reader-response criticism" received just five paragraphs in a chapter devoted to "Rhetorical Studies" in Stevens and Stewart's *A Guide to Literary Criticism and Research* (pp. 28-30). It appears that those interested in "teaching" literary theory are somewhat suspicious of the Reader-Response approach, fearing, I suspect, some lessening of their importance if readers find "subjectivity" among the privileged modes of literary study.

One of the primary questions of Reader-Oriented Criticism is the question of meaning, its constitution, its location. Where does meaning lie? In the text (i.e., the words on the page) or in the reader?

But parallel to this concern with the origin of meaning for reader-response critics is the emphasis on meaning as effect. Most reader-response critics define the effects of a text in terms of the meaning the reader gets from it. The basic argument is that if meaning is the realization of the text in the reader's mind, then an accurate description of that meaning lies in its effects on the reader. They add that effects can be investigated in terms of emotions, cognition, society, culture and so forth.

Norman Holland (1975) says that we find pleasure in confronting our fears in the works of fiction rather than in real life. He adds: "Each of us find in the literary work the kind of thing we characteristically wish or fear the most. Therefore, to respond, we need to be able to recreate from the literary work our characteristic

strategies for dealing with these deep wishes and fears" (p. 815). In the same article he describes the transformation of fear into enjoyment:

> Each reader, in effect, recreates the work in terms of his own identity theme. First, he shapes it so it will pass through his adaptive and defensive strategies for coping with the world. Secondly, he recreates for it the particular kind of fantasy and gratification he responds to. Finally, a third modality completes the individual's recreation of his identity or life-style from the literary work. . . . Thus we usually feel a need to transform raw fantasy into total experience of esthetics, moral, intellectual, or social coherence and significance. (p. 814)

In Holland's estimation, each individual understands a literary work in his or her own way, because each one employs different strategies to understand the literary work.

In another essay, "Re-covering 'The Purloined Letter': Reading as a Personal Transaction" (cited in Davis, pp. 363-375), Holland argues that rather than thinking of the text as an organic, tightly coherent and complete object, it should be conceived "as a process involving a text and a person. Let us open the text by assuming the person brings to it something extrinsic" (p. 370). He continues,

> We need a theory in which a text and its literent (reader, viewer, or hearer) act together to cause the response--call it biactive theory. The literent creates meaning and feeling in one continuous and indivisible transaction. One cannot separate . . . one part coming from the text and another part coming from the literent. (pp. 371-372)

In recent years there have been several interesting discussions regarding reading theory. A key player in these discussions has been Stanley Fish (1972). In *Self-Consuming Artifacts*, Fish proposed a critical view of reading-as-a-process. His method "involves an analysis of the developing responses of the reader in relation to the words as they succeed one another in time" (pp. 387-388). He describes the kinds of momentary suspensions that occur as readers make choices between syntactical options.

In Fish's term, "meaning" does not reside in a static or suspended place in the words put on the page by the writer. Meaning is "an event, something that is happening between the words and in the reader's mind" (p. 389).

Another theorist, Walker Gibson (1950), says there are two different readers in the same person in every literary experience. There is what he calls the "real" or actual reader, the one that actually opens the book and enters into the reading experience. And then there is the other he calls the "mock" reader. The mock reader is the one whose mask and costume the individual takes on in order to experience the language. "He is an artifact, controlled, simplified, abstracted out of the chaos of day to day sensations" (p. 265).

Gibson uses this delineation to create an awareness among readers that the literary experience is more than a relationship between themselves and the author, it is a relationship between the reader and a fictitious modification of themselves--the mock readers. Part of the responsibility of the teacher, Gibson posits, revolves around enlarging the several possibilities of the students, contending that as the students read many books and respond to the many worlds that the books create, they in effect become many different people. He illustrates by distinguishing between a good and a bad book. As he puts it, "A good book . . . is a book in whose mock reader we discover a person we refuse to become, a mask we refuse to put on, a role we will not play." He argues further:

> The problem of what mock reader--or what part of a mock reader--it is proper to accept, and what to reject, involves the whole overwhelming problem of learning to read and learning to act . . . the student's hesitation is no more than a larger question that possibly no teacher can presume to answer for him: What do I want to be? (p. 268)

Only the student can and should be allowed to determine who they want to be, the argument follows, and the only sure way to bring this about is to eliminate the situations that condition the students to toe the line and regurgitate for their teachers what they had been fed.

Bruce Miller (1980), on the other hand, concurs with the critical notion that literature is inherently beautiful, and for that precise reason it should not be taught, the argument being that everyone loves the beautiful. He stresses that since the love of beauty is a natural feeling, then the teacher's task, after giving what help is indispensable, "is to get out of the way of the student's appreciation" (p. 103). He adds that "even though the teacher knows interesting facts about the author which the student has not yet discerned, still there comes a time when the teacher must practice restraint." This is extremely important because, "the teacher, who has already made the discoveries, must not be in such a hurry to communicate them that the student has not a chance for self-exploration" (p. 111).

Holland, Fish, Gibson, and Miller speak to some of the main issues, methods, and conclusions that Reader-Oriented critics address, but they are by no means the only proponents or adherents of the theory. I will now offer a brief review of two books by Louise Rosenblatt. Louise Rosenblatt is one of the most respected critics of the Reader-Oriented mode. Her work in the field predated by dozens of years the blossoming works of contemporary reading research.

Rosenblatt's first book, *Literature as Exploration* (1938), was well known to those who were on the faculties of schools of education, working with English teachers-in-training. Rosenblatt herself worked extensively with English teachers-in-training

during her long and distinguished scholarly career. It is worth noting that *Literature as Exploration*, which sets out a theory of dealing with literary works in a personal and creative way, was published in the very same year as the first edition of *Understanding Poetry*. In a note in "Introduction" to *The Reader in the Text* (1980), Susan R. Suleiman suggests a possible reason for why *Literature as Exploration* did not have the same impact on the literary critical scene at the time as did *Understanding Poetry*. She points out that the work "was influential among those most concerned with questions of pedagogy . . . [while] its relevance for literary theory was recognized only recently, when it was rediscovered by Bleich and others" (p. 45).

In the fourth edition of *Literature as Exploration* (1983), Rosenblatt explains that the essence of literature is not so much an acquisition of "additional information as additional experience", noting that,

> Literature provides a living-through, not simply knowledge about: not the fact that lovers have died young and fair, but a living of *Romeo and Juliet*; not theories about Rome, but a living-through of the conflicts in *Julius Caesar* or the paradoxes of Caesar and Cleopatra. (p. 38)

Consequently, she elaborates that:

> We go through motions if our primary concern is to enable the student to recognize various literary forms, to identify various verse patterns, to note the various earmarks of the style of a particular author, to detect recurrent symbols, or to discriminate the kinds of irony or satire. Acquaintance with the formal aspects of literature will not in itself insure esthetic sensitivity. One can demonstrate familiarity with a range of literary works, be a judge of craftsmanship, and still remain, from the point of view of a rounded understanding of art, esthetically immature. . . . We shall be aware of the need to sharpen the student's responses to the sensuous, technical, and formal aspects of literary work. But we shall see these as merged with--reinforcing and reinforced--responses to those elements in the work that meet the reader's need for psychological satisfactions and social insights. (p. 52)

In her second book, *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* (1978), Rosenblatt

establishes her basic premise immediately: "A text, once it leaves its authors hands, is simply paper and ink until a reader evokes from it a literary work--sometimes even a literary work of art" (p. ix). Among the main contributions of this book is the introduction of concepts for two kinds of reading: "efferent" and "aesthetic." By the former, Rosenblatt means reading done in order to acquire data. In this type of reading, matters of precise diction or style are relatively unimportant. A good paraphrase will serve as well as the original. In other words, the knowledge to be carried away from the reading is what is important.

In aesthetic reading on the other hand, the reader's concern is focused on what happens during the reading, with the transactions that occur between him/herself and the text being read. A second significant point developed by Rosenblatt is that only during an instance of reading does "the poem itself" emerge. And out of each reading, a possible new poem emerges.

> It happens during a coming-together, a compenetration, of a reader and a text. The reader brings to the text his past experiences and present personality. Under the magnetism of the ordered symbols of the text, he marshals his resources and crystallizes out from the stuff of memory, thought, and a feeling of a new order, a new experience, which he sees as the poem. (p. 12)

This is how Rosenblatt describes the act that produces "the poem itself":

> The text presents limits or controls; the personality and culture brought by the reader constitute another type of limitation on the resultant synthesis, the lived-through work of art. The reader's attention constantly vibrates between the pole of the text and the pole of his own responses to it. (p. 129)

It is readily noticeable from this attempt to define and review Reader-Oriented Criticism that the voices speaking for this cause are many and varied in the understanding of what the theory entails.

Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature on literary theories and their application in the college classroom from two main sources: an analysis of the content of *College English* (from 1981-1985), as well as the general world of literary criticism. In *College English*, articles that concentrated on literature were surveyed to have a sense of what English professionals were discussing, both about literary theory and their application in the classroom.

Five theories were reviewed: (1) New Criticism, (2) Structuralism, (3) Deconstruction, (4) Feminist Criticism, and (5) Reader-Oriented Criticism. These theories appear to be the most discussed or applied in the undergraduate classroom, considering the development they received in *College English*. It was interesting to observe the degree to which these theories were demonstrated in the classes I visited for this project.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Elliot Eisner (1979) has observed that the long domination of quantitative research methods in the field of education has created a situation where quantitative methods are considered to be, if not the only reliable research methods, at the very least, the most appropriate methodology for educational practice and research (pp. 12-23). This single approach to educational research has let methodology dictate the nature of educational study. It is important, however, that researchers should use methodology that is appropriate to the questions rather than demanding that the questions be appropriate to the methodology.

Ethnography studies the culture of bounded groups with an interest in describing and analyzing the culture[1] as a whole. The main objective of ethnographers, according to Jacobs, is to describe "a unique way of life, documenting the meanings attached to the events and showing how the parts fit together into an integral whole" (p. 18).

Despite the fact that there are several different ways for doing ethnography, all practitioners of the methodology identify with three basic tenets. The first is that all

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[1]Jacobs (1988) defines culture as "patterns of behavior and patterns for behavior" (p. 18).

ethnographers generally personally participate in the gathering of the data. They do this either through participant observation (which entails the presence of the researcher at the scene where the data is collected) or through ethnographic interviews, or a combination of both methods (Malinowski, 1961).

Another tenet that most ethnographers subscribe to is that informants' (the culture being studied or the people participating in a particular study) point of view must be documented, preferably in their own words. Thirdly, ethnographers are united in their insistence that qualitative methods are best suited to analyze and interpret ethnograhic data.

Ethnographic field research (in this specific instance through the use of the case study method) seemed to be the most appropriate research method for accomplishing the purposes of this study because the general aim of the study was to render a contextual description of the undergraduate literature classroom in an attempt to understand what it means to become literarily competent.

Spradley (1980) has observed that the essence of ethnographic research is to "understand another way of life from the native point of view" (p. 3). He stressed that this line of research "involves the disciplined study of what [that world] is like to people who have learned to see, hear, speak, think, and act in ways that are different" (p. 3). Johnson (1975) amplified this by stating that the field researcher "participates with a group of people in order to observe their everyday actions in their natural settings" (p. x).

In "Problems in Participant Observation," Schwartz and Schwartz (1969) reiterate the same point of view:

> We define observation as a process in which the observer's presence in a social situation is maintained for the purpose of scientific investigation. The observer is in a face-to-face relationship with the observed, and by participating with the observed, and by participating with them in their natural setting, he gathers data. (p. 46)

But McCall and Simmons (1969), though generally saying the same thing, sound a note of caution. They note that:

> It is misleading to regard field research as one method. . . . It refers to a characteristic blend or combination of methods and techniques . . . [and] involves some amount of genuinely social interaction in the field with the subjects of the study, some direct observation of relevant events, some formal and a great deal of informal interviewing, some systematic counting, some collection of documents and artifacts. (p. 1)

They provide further details concerning ethnographic field research:

> Two methods are usually thought of as characteristic of the investigator in the field. He invariably keeps a daily log of events and of relatively casual, informal, continuous interviews both of which go into his field notes. . . . He also develops informants . . . who are willing and are able to give him information about practices and rules . . . and events he does not directly observe. (pp. 8-9)

The above elements form the basic methodological guidelines on which this study's research design was constituted. But as a method of inquiry, the observational research design has its strengths and weaknesses. The primary results of ethnographic research are description, explanation, and understanding. Consequently, very often there is little support for predictive generalization from such studies.

Detractors of the design contend that case analysis is essentially intuitive, primitive, and unmanageable; respondents are said to object more frequently to field research than to survey results. Even Robert K. Yin (1989), a well-known advocate of the methodology, while affirming field research (specifically case study) as a systematic research tool, is quick to point out that all types of case study (exploratory, descriptive,

and explanatory) "must cope with the essential problem that . . . there will always be too many 'variables' for the number of observations to be made" (p. 59).

These objections and reactions notwithstanding, the observational field research appears to be most suited for this study because the projected outcomes of this study are description, explanation, and understanding and not proof. Explanation, description, and understanding are highlighted better in field research than in other research methods.

The appropriate methodology that answered the questions postulated to generate the stated outcomes of this study were qualitative.[1] In pursuant of the goals of this study, broad ethnographic techniques were employed in gathering and analyzing the pertinent data.

The study was designed to answer two main questions. The first is: How do students acquire a sense of literature? And the second, corresponding to the first, is: How do teachers affect or influence the process through which students acquire that "sense" of literary competence? Answers to the above two questions could greatly inform the main purpose of the study, which is a description of the process of literary acculturation. But to do this thoroughly, other related questions were posed, and the answers those questions provided helped to clarify the process.

Under the first question (How do students develop a sense of literature?), several of the following related questions were investigated:

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[1]Kirk and Miller's (1986) definition of qualitative research is as good as any. They explain that qualitative research methodology "is a particular tradition in social science that fundamentally depends on watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language, on their own terms" (p. 9).

1. What do students perceive to be the essence of literature?
2. What teaching approaches do students deduce help them to better understand that perceived essence?
3. How do students approach the text in preparation for class?
4. During class, how do students respond to the text?
5. After class, how do students react to the previous class experience?
6. How do students affect or influence the teaching and understanding of literature (if in fact they do at all)?
7. What do students expect to gain from taking a course in literature?

Similarly, under the second question (How do teachers affect the students' acquisition or understanding of literature), several other related questions were investigated:

1. What do literature teachers perceive their role to be?
2. What literary theories drive what they teach as literature and why do they adopt such?
3. What theories inform their pedagogical practice in the classroom?
4. What is the philosophy behind the teacher's evaluation practices, and how is the acquisition of literary competence affected by that evaluation principle?
5. Who or what are the major influences in the teacher's selection of text for the course?

To get answers to these and other associated questions, it was necessary to use a design that enables the researcher to observe and to "participate" in the life of the teachers and students in the context of their classes, and still present an opportunity for

the teachers and students to articulate their impressions and observations in their own way.

Sources of Data

Data for this study was gathered from three main sources: documents, observation, and interviews.

Documents

The first sources were documents, both published and unpublished, that provided information about how English literature students at Insight University[1] acquire the competencies that qualify them to be literature literate. Documentary data included the following: (1) English department minutes, reports, memos or directives which discussed ways of acculturating students into the world of literature; (2) course syllabi of classes studied; class handouts, tests and examinations; (3) sample notes taken by students during class sessions, graded assignments including tests and examinations; and (4) literature on the goals of literary and pedagogical methods.

Observation

Three separate undergraduate English literature classes in the department of English at Insight University were visited 10 to 23 times each during the quarter to observe the class process. The classes chosen reflect some differences in stages of

[1]In order to protect the privacy and maintain the anonymity of the study's participants, Insight University was chosen as a pseudonym of the university where the study was conducted. The names of the professors and students are also pseudonyms. The university is a private Christian school with a population of about three thousand highly diversified students representing numerous countries and ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

maturity and complexity in literary understanding and appreciation as indicated by class standing. From such a spread, one expected to get a sense of what one obtains in the four-year literature program. The observation centered on how students and teachers related to the teaching and learning environment.

Interview

Interviews were used extensively throughout the study. This included interviews with each teacher whose class was used for the study as well as one student from each class. Teachers of the class were asked to recommend students to be interviewed, but the main criteria for selecting interviewees was an expression of willingness on the part of the students to be interviewed, as well as a demonstration of their ability as competent informants.

The number and length of the interviews was dictated by each interviewee's schedule but every attempt was made to obtain information from each interviewee along the guidelines of the questions the study proposed.

Initial interviews were short and general in scope--adhering to the open-ended question technique posited by Spradley (1979) in which the purpose was to develop rapport and friendliness with the informant or interviewee.

In subsequent interviews, the questions were more in-depth. As the study progressed, the scope of the interviews shifted from the collection of general information to gathering very specific information concerning the objectives of the study--the acculturation of students into literature literacy in the department of English.

In sum, these interviews were used not only to develop greater detail and awareness of what actually goes on in the literature classrooms at Insight University, but

also to corroborate documentary data. In all interviews, however, the interviewer was sensitive to the interviewee by being as unobtrusive as possible under the constraints of time, place, and circumstances.

Each interview session with the student was tape-recorded and later transcribed and analyzed.

Criteria for Selection of Class and/or Teacher

Two main criteria determined which teachers and which classes were selected to be observed for the project: (1) how long the teacher has taught in the English department, and (2) the type of literature class he or she teaches.

Also, three levels of teacher experience were determined for the study and the three teachers who were chosen reflected these levels. Experience, here, was narrowly defined as the number of years they have taught literature classes in the department of English. Consequently, one of the teachers selected for the project was fairly new, both to teaching college level literature and to the department. A good candidate for a teacher fitting this description was someone who had joined the faculty within the last four years (one generation of college students). In this study, he or she was considered to be the least experienced teacher.

The second category was the moderately experienced teacher. The teacher who fit this description had taught in the English department (and taught literature classes) anywhere from 4 to 16 years (i.e., one to four generations of college students). The experienced teacher, the one who fit the third description of teacher in this study, had taught literature in the department for 20 years and upwards.

With regard to the classes themselves, the three, apart from reflecting differences in degree of difficulty (exhibited by the class levels), also differed with regard to genre as well as the type of students expected to take them. For example, at least one of the three classes was required of English majors, another fit the general education requirement for both English majors and non-majors, while the third had restricted registration requirements.

Ensuring Credibility

Harry Wolcott (cited in Eisner & Peshkin, 1990) describes some steps ethnographers could take to ensure that what they do is credible. In the section that follows I show how I utilized Wolcott's points (pp. 127-135) to achieve credibility in my study.

Listen More, Talk Less

When I interviewed the teachers and students in my study, I made it a point to pay attention to what they said in order that I could follow up with questions based on leads suggested in their statements. My questions were short and open-ended, thus allowing my informants to do most of the talking. When I asked each teacher, for example, "Could you describe your philosophy of literature," they had enough range to attempt a response. Often they pondered over the question for a while, but once they started talking they sustained it for some time. They did the talking; I listened.

Record Accurately

Tape recordings enabled me to maintain accurate data. I was able to transcribe my informants' precise words. The recordings provided me repeated access

to the original context of the statements so that my interpretations were made not on the basis of my memory, which could be faint, but on a more accurate records.

Writing Early

I made it a practice to try to transcribe from my tapes, and write about my classroom observations before my next interview or class observation. While I was not always able to finish with every transcription before my next visit to the same class, I always described my class observations before I visited the class again. By so doing I did not confuse the contexts of class events.

Providing Primary Data

Qualitative data lends itself to subjective interpretation because researchers look at the data from their own individual perspectives. To limit the potential for being overly subjective, I allowed the informants to express their own thoughts and ideas themselves, as is, uncensured, through my summaries. Much of the data I gathered about what the teachers and students thought and proposed about literature are reported in this study in their own words.

Reporting Fully

While I did not report every detail that did not fit the developing account, or my interpretation of it, I made sure that I reported the data that unfolded as fully as I could.

In all I observed 48 class sessions (American Literature, 23; Honors, 10; Literary Analysis, 15). This corresponded to 40 hours of tape recordings, filling 23

ninety-minutes cassette tapes. The tapes were subsequently transcribed into four exercise books of approximately 370 hand-written pages.

Being Candid

I was an instrument in the study, and I make that clear. Whatever I reported was filtered through my subjective point of view. I do not pretend that this study is "objective" simply because I use the third-person pronoun instead of the first-person.

Feedback

Often I went back to my informants to seek clarification for something they had said, or my perception of something they had done. Through that process I was able to iron out some misunderstandings.

Achieving Balance

I tried to achieve balance in my description or reporting of the data. I went over the raw data after I had written my first and second drafts of the report. This pursuit of balance was undertaken primarily to satisfy my personal sense of fairness in my interpretation of the raw data.

Analysis of Data

Clifford Geertz's (1973) observation about cultural analysis could be conveniently applied to qualitative analysis of all types. His statement needs repeating so that the qualitative researcher is reminded always about what is involved when analyzing data. Geertz wrote:

> Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete. And, worse than that, the more deeply it goes the less complete it becomes. It is a strange science whose most

> telling assertions are its most tremulously based, in which to get somewhere with the matter at hand is to intensify the suspicion, both your own and that of others, that you are not quite getting it right. (p. 29)

Analyzing the data gathered for this project is not intended to be construed as profession of full and complete understanding of what it means to be literarily educated. It is believed, however, that the analytical principles used here to foster an understanding of the process of literary acculturation will, on the one hand, "intensify the suspicion" that we "are not quite getting it all right," but also on the other hand, help guard against the possibility that we could get it all wrong.

No meaningful research, ethnography not excepted, can yield useful knowledge without thoughtful analysis. "Analysis of any kind," observes Spradley (1980) "involves a way of thinking. It refers to a systematic examination of something to determine its parts, and their relationship to the whole." He equates the analytical process to a "search for patterns" pointing out that as "you have recorded what people do and say, you have been able to make inferences about what they know" (p. 85).

Several analytical strategies have been used to address qualitative research propositions. Yin (1989) writes about "the three dominant modes" of analysis: namely, pattern-matching, explanation-building, and time-series and Dobbert (1982) recommends her five-step natural history method. In *Participant Observation*, Spradley outlines four approaches to take in analyzing data. He shows that data can be analyzed by domain, taxonomy, component, or theme. These analytical methods can be used singly or in combination with the others.

The analytical technique that appears to be most appropriate for this study is componential. As Spradley explains it, componential analysis involves "the systematic

search for the attributes . . . associated with cultural categories" (p. 131), which includes "the entire process of searching for contrasts, sorting them out, grouping some together as dimensions of contrasts, and entering all this information onto a paradigm" (p. 133). Much of the analytical pattern this research took in understanding the data involved comparing and contrasting the experiences and expressions of the people involved in the study.

First investigated was data from the interviews with the students and teachers concerning their attitudes about literature and the process of literary acculturation as they perceive them. An attempt was made to identify and group similar and contrasting ideas, perceptions, and points-of-view expressed in the interview data of all three teachers and three students.

Also compared and contrasted were the course syllabi of the three classes, class handouts, assignments, examination questions, and students' answers to examination questions. Investigation of student answers to examination questions and other course assignments included, but was not restricted to the three students interviewed.

A third aspect examined was field notes of the three classes observed, with particular attention paid to similar and contrasting events. The examination of these notes included transcription of tape-recordings of class sessions.

Comparing and contrasting the above data resulted in a somewhat clearer sense of the process of literary acculturation in the Department of English at Insight University.

Overview of the Study

The English department chair advised in selecting which three undergraduate literature classes scheduled to be taught in the fall and winter of 1990/1991 could be observed based on the criteria discussed above. The classes were selected according to such factors as class level: a sophomore, a junior, and a senior class. In each class, one student and the teacher were interviewed. I interviewed three different teachers and three different students for the study. All class sessions and all interviews were tape-recorded for transcription and analysis.

Generalizability of Findings

The broad intent of this study was to promote better awareness and personal insight in the process of literary acculturation in the undergraduate classroom. Experiences with the three classes, three teachers, and three students who took part in the study provided an example of such a process and thus served to satisfy this intent. Often, in educational studies, the term generalizability is defined narrowly, usually in a language that relates to sampling and statistical significance. If the term is understood in this restricted way, then, this study does not make any claims to universal generalizability of findings to other undergraduate literary programs.

Viewed thus restrictively, it could be argued, for example, that ethnographic case study is not considered generally adequate for the kind of predictive generalizability that such definition requires. This inadequacy is due to the fact that literature programs in undergraduate colleges and universities are unique and different in many ways. Differences in mission, resource availability, educational level of teachers, etc., could make the application of findings from this study, unlikely, and although Insight

University could be viewed as a representative sample of an undergraduate school community (by virtue of its accreditation with a recognized regional accreditation body), Insight University's comprehensive view of literary education may vary conceptually and philosophically in several important respects from that of other schools, and thus, findings here could be difficult to apply elsewhere.

Teaching and schooling are interested in individual students, and case studies allow the educational consumer to experience vicariously unique situations and unique individuals in their own cultural settings. There are differences in perspectives, and that is as it should be. When these perceptual differences are accepted as proper, that acceptance enables the individual to gain another insight--that each individual interprets what is seen differently. The role of the researcher, therefore, should not of necessity be viewed in terms of correct interpretation. As Robert Donmoyer (cited in Eisner & Peshkin, 1990) properly cautions, the researcher's role should be "to expand the range of interpretations available to the research consumer" (p. 194). Similarly, the aim of any meaningful generalization of any study should be an attempt to expand the range of interpretations. If the latter observation is accepted, then, again, in the words of Donmoyer, "uniqueness is an asset rather than a liability" (p. 194). The richness of the data presented should be the defense of the quality of a study rather than the statistical figures, which can often be manipulated to say what the researcher wants them to say.

Although the study professes to add to the store of knowledge in the literature by describing and analyzing the literary acculturation in one specific area, it also lays claim to universal generalizability in that it helps to expand the range of interpretations of the literary acculturation process. In addition, the increasing accumulation of studies

and reports of a similar nature make synthesis and generalization inevitable. Any recommendations that may be offered as a result of this study will apply specifically to the Insight University English Department environment, as well as other similar English programs elsewhere.

Ethical Considerations

This study was not in any way evaluative of the teachers or the students or any other persons who participated in it. Confidentiality for all participants was closely guarded. (The study was cleared by the Insight University Human Subjects Review Board.) To ensure confidentiality and/or anonymity, the study results changed names and/or disguised some of the facts that could have led to easy identification.

All information obtained from participants was discussed only with those connected with the study. All field notes and tape recordings were guarded so that only those associated with the study (e.g., supervising professors, this researcher, etc.) had access to them.

CHAPTER IV

CASE ONE: DAVID SLOCUUM'S LITERARY ANALYSIS CLASS

This chapter reports the results of the study of the Literary Analysis course taught by David Slocuum of Insight University during the Fall Quarter of 1990. This report is based on the examination of documents relating to the course, interviews, and observations of class sessions. The main purpose of the chapter is to describe the environment in which the Literary Analysis students were attempting to get a sense of literature.

Four main topics are investigated in the chapter: the class setting of the course, the teacher, a student of the course, and the text used in the course. Under each of these four main topics are descriptions of various other sub-topics considered relevant to the study's main questions.

Description of Course and Assignments

The *Undergraduate Colleges 1990-91 Bulletin* of Insight University describes ENGL 267 Literary Analysis as an "introduction to writing about literary forms and genres, with emphasis on analysis and interpretation and several critical approaches" (p. 116). The description of the course syllabus seems to be an amplification of the above bulletin summary, adding that, "the course introduces some of the specialized vocabulary

of literary studies and the expectations of literary research." The syllabus also states that students will be afforded "ample opportunity for . . . contributions and questions" because the course is essentially "discussion-based."

a. There will be two essay analyses on miscellaneous short stories, with a range of choices in both story and critical approach. The third essay will be a critical analysis of some aspect of Flannery O'Connor's short stories, using at least two short stories and some critical material (from the reader). The last essay will be a critical analysis of some aspect of Frost's poetry, dealing again with a variety of poems as well as use of the critical material available in the anthology. Essay length should be four to six pages.

b. After the essay on O'Connor, there will be a five period study of poetics: terms useful to the study of poetry and practice interpreting poems. This section of the course will culminate in an exam over poetic terminology, prosody, and analysis of a poem.

c. Students will read five articles from literary journals, one each week, and report in a page the essence of the article: its main purpose, organization, critical approach, type of evidence employed, along with a brief reaction to the article's interest or value. The reports should be related to the work of an author read during the quarter. A photocopy of the article reviewed and standard bibliographical information should be included.

d. Of the five percent possible, students will be docked ½ percent for each absence over two during the quarter.

Class Setting

Classroom

The Literary Analysis class did not meet in the designated English department building where most of the English classes were held. It met in a large, fully-carpeted, centrally air-conditioned classroom in the School of Education building just a block away from the English building. The teacher told me that the class was meeting in the Education building because the class was too large to fit in the classroom they were

initially scheduled for in the English building. The present classroom seated upward of 60 students.

The class also had access to the adjoining classroom which had a comparable seating capacity. The second classroom was used when the class divided into two for purposes of discussion. The seats in both classes were arranged in rows of six from front to back, and ten from the left end of the front row to the right end.

No seats were assigned to the students so on any given class period each student could choose where to sit on a first-come, first-served basis.

The teacher's desk and chair were positioned in front of the class. On the wall behind the desk was a large 4 ft x 12 ft blackboard. There was only one entrance to the room. When the door to the room was open during class, outside noise interferred with the class process; consequently, the door was closed during instruction.

Meeting Times

Literary Analysis is a three-credit hour course and met three times a week for approximately 30 times a quarter, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. Each class session was 50 minutes.

Class Composition

The class was made up of 40 students. Of this number 31 were women and 9 were men. Although the course number falls in the range usually taken during the student's sophomore year, only 45% of the students who took the class at the time of my investigation were sophomores. There were 4 freshmen, 18 sophomores, 10 juniors, and

8 seniors taking the class. Twenty-four of the students were non-Hispanic caucasians, 6 were black, 7 Asians, and 3 were Hispanics.

Typical Class Periods

It can be argued that no two class periods in a school situation are the same, and that there is nothing typical about any class day or period. While this reasoning has some merit, it is also true that in any given quarter of school, a class soon falls into a routine, so that even though the exact happenings of each class period are not exactly the same, there develops certain general outlines that are similar with regard to how that class operates.

In this section, I will describe the pattern that the Literary Analysis class of the Fall of 1990 at Insight University followed. Out of this pattern emerged the dynamics that made the class work.

Five Minutes before Class Began

The Literary Analysis class officially began at 10:30 a.m. on the three days per week it met but because students had 10 minutes between classes to make their way to the next class, it was common to see the class at least one-third full five minutes before class started. Usually, students used the five minutes at hand to engage in all types of "small" talk ranging from their personal life relationships, to the hottest news item anywhere that day, including the relative degree of their boredom with school. In all my observations in the class, very seldom did students talk about the Literary Analysis class or their reading assignments. It was as if the students had conspired among themselves to use those few minutes to talk about anything but the class. The

only exception was the day they had to take an exam on poetry. On that day, not only did the bulk of the students arrive in class before the proverbial five minutes before, but they sat in small pockets discussing such possible exam topics as rhyme and meter of the poems they had studied.

Usually, the class teacher, Dr. Slocuum (who preferred to be called by his first name, David) was in class during the five minutes before class began. More often than not, one student or two engaged him in some discussion usually relating to class.

10:30 a.m.: Class Begins

In any given class period in the Literary Analysis class, a visitor was likely to see one of three scenarios in the class. The three structures differed principally in how the teacher divided the class up. One was likely to meet a full class--that is, the teacher and the entire Literary Analysis class members in one class room, or David in one classroom with one-half of the students, and the other half in the adjoining classroom. The other half of the class was "taught" by a graduate English literature student. In the third scenario, students were grouped into threes and fours and scattered throughout the two classrooms. During the 18 times I visited the class, the full class met 4 times, 4 times in two groups, and 10 times in smaller pockets of threes and fours.

In any of the three situations, when the bell rang for class to begin, David called the class together and used the first two or three minutes, and never more than five minutes, instructing the students about the set up for the day.

The Full Class Session

The full-class sessions were led by David, who began by setting the stage for a discussion of the assigned reading. Often, he did this by asking several questions about the reading.

The introduction to September 27, 1990, class session is a good illustration of what happened during a typical full-class session. On this day the assigned reading was Zaren Van Der Zeen's "A Secret Sorrow." David used questions to set the stage for the class discussion. In a series of rhetorical questions, David inquired:

> What about the story "A Secret Sorrow?" What do you make out of the fact that the problem was her reproductive system? Why was having a baby important to her? Why is that important to the story? What do you make of the fact that it is the focus of the story?

At this stage the class was silent. After a moment of deafening silence, a student volunteered a response to one of the questions. His response was short: "She is at the verge of blaming herself for her inability to have children." David followed up from the student's response, neither affirming what he said nor rejecting it "Why do you say that?" he asked. This response was very typical of David. If he disagreed with a response, he questioned the basis for the student's statement and gave the student, or anybody who wanted to follow that line of reasoning, the opportunity to make a case.

On a good day, other students joined in the discussion, but more often, David supplied the questions and led the discussion.

Typically, the same four or five students did most of the student responses. The other students appeared interested in the discussion but they just did not join in. Occasionally, David called a student by name to respond to a particular question;

sometimes the response was forthcoming, other times not. David said of those who were not forthcoming: "Sometimes you decided that it is not worth embarrassing that one student who may not know the answer, so you encourage them the best you can without naming names" (1:26).

Another method that David often used to "break the ice," as he called it, when his full class was in session, was by asking the students to open to a particular page. He read a passage and pointed out specific aspects of the reading he wished the students to note. He used this method in the discussion of "Fleur." David used this story to explain ways of understanding. He read the first two paragraphs of the story and explained to the class that the reader is not the first interpreter of the story, because as in the case in "Fleur," "there are people inside the story interpreting the story." Having made this point, he read the third and fourth paragraphs and pointed out certain repetitive patterns that were already developing. His admonition to the students was: "Look for repetitive patterns, study the structure of the story, and put characters in relationship to each other."

When he used the reading and explanation of the passage approach, there was very little student input or inquiry about what he was doing. What was most evident was that the level of note-taking on the part of the students increased remarkably.

Two-Groups Sessions

On days when David divided the class into two, he sent the second group to the adjoining room and either led out in the discussion there or designated a graduate English literature student to coordinate the discussion. The designated student coordinator's role was mainly to facilitate student-to-student discussion of what they were

reading. The student was one who knew the piece well and understood what direction David wanted the discussion to go. David alternated between the two groups so that he was never with the same group twice in succession.

Whichever group David coordinated, he used the same pedagogical approach. He got the students to form a large semi-circle and sat in the middle of the open arch. Usually he opened the discussion by asking a question of a specific student, often one of the students most eager to speak. Other times he single-handedly carried the class through a certain understanding of the reading material and invited a reaction to that interpretation.

David explained that his main objective in dividing the class into two was to reduce the student/teacher ratio to a size manageable enough to have every member of the class participating. "When you reduce the class size this way and you sit eyeball-to-eyeball with the students, you create the atmosphere for everybody to be relaxed enough to speak their minds about what they're reading" (1:28). But here, as in the large composite group, most of the students did not participate in the discussions as David would have preferred. The same individuals who did most of the talking when the full class was in session also did much of the talking here, and the depth of student responses and contributions was not very different. If David asked a question that demanded a factual response, usually there was no shortage of students chorusing the reply, but when the question was open-ended and required a more reflective, in-depth, or analytical response, the response was usually late in coming and usually from the same vocal group.

Several Groups Session

On days when David divided the students into many three- or four-member groups to discuss the reading assignments, the partition that divided the two classrooms was drawn apart to create one large room. The ten to thirteen groups of students were scattered throughout the big room.

Before the group discussions began, David instructed the groups regarding the direction he wanted the discussions to go. Usually he told them verbally what he wanted them to look for or what themes he wanted them to develop. With discussions about poetry, he usually wrote several possible angles to the poems on the board and asked the groups to determine the merits or demerits of those approaches.

David generally circulated among the groups, listening to their discussions, and every now and then, he pulled up a chair and sat with a group and joined in their discussion.

David was careful that the students did not remain in one particular group, so he developed a rotation system to ensure that the pairings were different each time. He also made sure that he appointed different students as coordinators of the discussions. He believed that because the students did not know who was going to be the group leader before he announced it, it served as an incentive for the students to read the assigned material before class each day.

It was in these small groups that one of the reasons why the majority of the students did not participate in class discussion surfaced. Many of the students came to class not having read the assigned reading. It was interesting how some of the students circumvented what David thought would be the incentive to read. On several occasions,

I sat in groups where the designated coordinator (who had not read the assigned material) of a discussion group simply confessed to the other members that he or she had not read the assignment because of certain reasons. Almost always the ones who had read the material covered up the coordinator's trail by quickly summarizing the story with enough detail to ensure that such a person could follow up and make an intelligent discussion possible.

On one occasion, I sat with a group of four students, none of whom had read the assignment. The designated coordinator simply asked the other members if they had read a certain story which had been discussed in the past. Two of them had, so he told them to discuss that story instead. And all four of them, with straight faces, discussed that story with enthusiasm, and even argued loudly about it.

If David perceived that the groups had had enough time for discussion and they still had about 10 minutes to spare, he asked all the groups to reassemble in one classroom and share some of their insights with the others. When this happened, there was more animated discussion than at other times under different circumstances.

Last Two Minutes of Class

On several occasions, David terminated class about two minutes before the end of class. Usually he did this when he had graded assignments to return or when he had some information that needed to be passed on before the next class period. Almost always, this interruption of normal class took place when he taught the whole class as a unit or when he had the class divided into several little groups. It never happened when I observed the two-group session.

The Text

David structured the texts for his class around two main genres: the short story and poetry. With only 10 weeks and approximately 30 fifty-minute class sessions available, he reasoned that incorporating the full-length novel or biography in the course structure would leave him very little time to attend to other genres. He excluded drama from consideration for the same reason.

Having made the decision to exclude lengthy works and drama in the course, David looked for an anthology that provided enough choice of text in the two areas he wanted to emphasize. He found it in the 2nd edition of Michael Meyer's *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*. The text anthology, which is reviewed as being "solidly traditional," and "comprehensive," includes 45 stories, 390 poems and 17 plays. The publishers advertise the 1887-page anthology as expanding the canon "to make it truly representative of the best literature from many different voices," claiming that more than one-half the stories, one-third of the poems, and one-third of the plays are by minority writers and writers from other cultures (book flap).

Table 3 shows a breakdown of the text used in the literary analysis class.

Representativeness of Text Used

By sex of author

Of the 12 short stories used for the class, 8 were written by women and 4 by men. Of the 8 stories written by women, 5 were by Flannery O'Conner, whose writing was used by the teacher as a "case study" in short-story writing.

TABLE 3

LITERARY ANALYSIS READING LIST

The Short Story

Year Pub.	Title	Author	Sex of Author	Ethnic Origin
1894	"The Story of the Hour"	Kate Chopin	F	WNH*
1899	"The Lady with the Pet Dog"	Anton Checkov	M	WNH
1972	"The Lady with the Pet Dog"	Carol Oates	F	WNH
1986	"The Lesson"	Toni Bambara	M	WNH
1843	"Fleur"	Louise Edrich	F	WNH
1843	"The Birthmark"	Nathaniel Hawthorne	M	WNH
1898	"An Outpost of Progress"	Joseph Conrad	M	WNH
1955	"Good Country People"	Flannery O'Conner	F	WNH
1961	"Everything that Rises Must Converge:	Flannery O'Conner	F	WNH
1964	"Revelation"	Flannery O'Conner	F	WNH
1953	"A Good Man Is Hard to Find"	Flannery O'Conner	F	WNH
1953	"Parker's Back"	Flannery O'Connner	F	WNH
	Poetry			
1958	"Constantly Risking Absurdity"	Lawrence Ferringhetti	M	WNH
1711	From "An Essay on Criticism"	Alexander Pope	M	WNH
1633	"The Flea"	John Donne	M	WNH
1986	"Nighttime Fires"	Regina Barreca	F	WNH

Table 3—Continued

1912	"The Convergence of the Twain"	Thomas Hardy	M	WNH
1983	"Titanic"	David Slavitt	M	WNH
1925	"For a Lady I Know"	Countee Cullen	M	Black
1940	"Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Town"	E. E. Cummings	M	WNH
1923	"What Lips My Lips Have Kissed"	Edna Millay	F	WNH
1818	"Ozymandias"	P. B. Shelley	M	WNH
1609	"When, In Disgrace with Fortune Men's Eyes"	William Shakespeare	M	WNH
1914	"Mending Wall"	Robert Frost	M	WNH
1914	"After Apple-Picking"	Robert Frost	M	WNH
1916	"Birches"	Robert Frost	M	WNH
1923	"Fire and Ice"	Robert Frost	M	WNH
1923	"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"	Robert Frost	M	WNH
1942	"The Silken Tent"	Robert Frost	M	WNH

* White Non-Hispanic

The situation changes drastically when one considers the authorship by sex of the poems used in the course. Eighteen poems were used; of this number, 16 were written by men. Robert Frost's poetry was emphasized in the section with 6 of his poems studied over a two-week period.

By author's ethnic origin

The stories and poems used in the class were overwhelmingly by British and American authors, all but one of whom were white non-hispanics. Of the 30 works studied, only 2 were by non-British or American authors. Even these two are arguable because Joseph Conrad (the second in the company of Anton Chekhov) had left Poland more than two decades previous to beginning his writing career, and had become a British citizen and wrote in English.

By period

Twenty-two of the 30 literary works utilized in the Analysis class were written within the last century. Of this number, 11 were written between 1900-1950 and another 11 between 1950 and 1986. Table 4 gives a full representation of the breakdown by period:

The Teacher: David Slocuum

Literary Background and Teaching Experience

David Slocuum is relatively new on the English Department faculty at Insight University. At the time of this study, he was in his second year of teaching literature classes at the school. He was recruited as soon as he had completed his Ph.D. at a major university on the West Coast. Prior to his appointment at Insight, the only college teaching David had done was teaching composition as a teaching assistant during his graduate studies, first at Insight University while he was obtaining his M.A. and later while getting his Ph.D.

TABLE 4

BREAKDOWN OF WORKS BY PERIOD

Period	No. of Works
1600-1650	2
1651-1700	0
1701-1750	1
1751-1800	0
1801-1850	2
1851-1900	3
1901-1950	11
1951-1986	11

David went back to his childhood when tracing his earliest encounter with literature. He remembered that "there were quite a few books around [their] house" notably the "We Were There" series (1:35). As a child, David remembered that he liked Civil War books best, and did not remember reading anything by the so-called classical authors. "The only classical author that I read, classic in the sense that it was part of the recognized canon of American and English literature, was Mark Twain. I read a lot of Mark Twain books as a child" (1:36).

It was not until David went to college, however, that he took English studies seriously, and even then only during the last 2 years because during his freshman and sophomore years in college he contemplated on being a theology major.

"In the academy," David recollected, "I specifically avoided taking American or English literature classes because I thought that they were sissy or stupid or something" (1:30). But during his junior year in college he

> became good friends with some English majors and some English teachers, and they would say to me every now and then, 'Why don't you read this book'. So I went ahead and read them. Then I thought, well, maybe it would be fun to be an English major. I started getting a neat conception of what an English major is . . . so during my junior year I changed and became an English major. (1:37)

David saw his junior year in college as very pivotal to his interest in literature. It was then that he started reading what is commonly referred to as traditional canon literature, and learned traditional techniques for interpretation of literary work (1:37).

Philosophy of Literature

In a series of interviews I had with David, I asked him several questions regarding his philosophy of literature. Some of the issues we talked about are discussed below.

The Literarily Competent

David had definite ideas of who a literarily competent person is or should be. "Such a person should have enough background in literature." Background is important to David because he believes that for literature to be "exciting" it should be compared to what one has read in the past. But more than background, a literarily competent person, according to David, is one "who is constantly thinking of ways to react to the material, to dialogue with the author, having a sense of and not just storing up what has been read in the past." He explained further:

> Such a person should be able to respond to literature, to do something with it, and not to let it roll over them as if they're passive receptors. They should be able to

> respond to it in intelligent dialogue with the teacher, the author, and in intelligent writing. I hope that such a person would be able to come up with something to say about what they read and be able to convince other people in their speaking or in their writing that what they have to say is worth listening to. (1: 42)

When asked to expand on this on another occasion, David explained that, anyone immersed in literature should not just know a certain perspective that is given in a poem or a novel but should "understand what that perspective means, whether they agree with it or not." To illustrate, he cited the celebrated (well-known) statement by Kurtz in Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness*[1], "the horror, the horror":

> It's one thing to remember that Kurtz said "the horror, the horror;" it's another thing to try and create or understand the world view that those two words represent. You have to be able to expand on that, and talk about that. What are the implications of those words? What is the kind of psychology that would motivate Kurtz to say that? Or when you say Conrad's substitution of The Intended, her name, for "The horror, the horror," what's the meaning of the substitution? Because you see, there's a whole philosophical subtext for just those words. And you can't really get at what Conrad is doing until you understand what the sub-text is. In other words, "the horror, the horror" is just like the tip of the iceberg above the water level and all the implications are underneath. So you have to not only see what's out there on the surface but to see what they are pointing to or what it's attached to. (1:46)

He cautioned that literature is a very "suggestive medium" which does not give one a one-to-one equation when things are translated. "Words are like suggestive windows of implications which call for an active response." So, "a literarily competent person will have to seek out the implication, to work with the text" (1:48).

The Benefits of Literature

In response to my inquiry about the utility value of literature, David took me through a short history of the debate. I asked him what his thinking was concerning

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[1]I will not provide bibliographic citations for well-known works works of literature mentioned by the teachers.

what literature does for the student or the person interested in the subject. His response is given here:

> This is a question that has a long history of debate. The traditional ideas, traditional in the sense that they have persisted for so long, were several. From the 18th century to the 19th century, literary study was justified in several different ways. One was that literature teaches the student better command of language, both logical and reasoning skills. Another was that through literature the student is introduced to high and lofty, even noble thoughts. But the idea that literature made better humans out of people (that literature could save people from the modern industrial society, as was promoted and argued by Matthew Arnold) and that literature was an escape to an older, better valued system from the one the modern industrial age provided, was premised on the notion that literature is a humanizing entity. These ideas received a severe blow at the end of World War II when the Allied forces that had entered into Germany discovered German commanders in the concentration camps reading Schiller and Shakespeare. They couldn't understand how they could be reading such beautiful literature and at the same time be running concentration camps. (1:41)

David recalled something a professor in graduate school told him, regarding this argument that literature is a great humanizing force, and that it makes us better people. The professor invited him to sit in an English department faculty meeting and look around at the other faces, for then the falsehood of that assertion stares one clearly in the face.

But David countered that, his professor's skepticism notwithstanding, he, to an extent, identifies with the argument that literature makes people more sympathetic, because as he put it: "In reading a wide variety of literature, you are introduced to points of view of many other people. In order to read and understand successfully, you have to be able to at least temporarily adopt the point of view of these other people" (1:43). He argued that in doing so, one consciously or unconsciously gets to see things from other people's perspectives, and consequently, one gets to understand other perspectives besides one's own.

> So, I think, for intellectual exercise and for teaching sympathy and the ability to understand what other people are trying to say, to learn how to more forcefully shape your own thoughts, and in fact even just to learn how to have thoughts in the first place (because it is by no means assumed that people are going to think just because they have brains), reading a lot of good literature helps you to learn to be able to put together thoughts, because that's what literary pieces themselves do. So there are a lot of practical and ideational reasons for studying literature. (1:44)

David said even the average student soon realized that literary scholars or teachers do not just read a story for the enjoyment of reading the story. He posited that if they have read at all in the past, that might be a typical reason for why they read, because reading itself often is a pleasurable activity, and reading narrative is a particularly pleasurable kind of reading. "But they come to class and the teacher starts, as they imagine, pulling all these interpretations out of a magician's hat, and they don't see how you get from the text all these different interpretations--philosophical interpretations, symbolism, and a lot of other things" (1:48).

David said he was aware that this situation frustrates the students. There seems to be a big gap between reading for pleasure and reading for interpretation for them. So, what they might try to do is fill in the gap by reading the text, "and they can say I see this and I can see this, and maybe I can see how they got there." But, he stressed that what they are missing is the process of working through the text to its implication. "And if they're missing that vital bridge, I don't care how much criticism they might read about something, and how much primary literature they read, they're missing really what I think is the most interesting part" (1:49). He called this "part" the "process of walking through the text itself" to find out what those implications are. He likened learning how to do that process to a rock:

> It is taking it up, looking at it from different sides, breaking it open and seeing its different possibilities, that's what I want my students to get a feeling that they can

> do on their own. Not that they can say I know what Shakespeare is saying in *Hamlet*, and I can repeat to you what the critics say about it, but that they can take the text and work with it, and come up with implications that would make them have confidence in their own interpretive ability. (1:49)

Creating a sense of confidence and competence in the student's interpretive ability is something David prizes dearly.

What Is Good Literature?

When I asked David to define good literature, he referred to Frank Kermode's *History and Value* in which Kermode discusses how we decide that there is value in a certain work of literature. Kermode takes two works from the 1950s. One of them was a novel by some author who is now forgotten. The other one is Nabokov's *Lolita*. In Kermode's discussion, he shows that both of the books were written about the same period, and shows that both books received the same kind of review at some point. Now *Lolita* is remembered as a classic and the other one is forgotten. Kermode's question, and David's too, he said, is why? What is the reason that one book got attention and the other did not?

David was tentative about the possible causes that bring this situation about, but he suggested that part of it might have to do with the notion of rereadability. "With great literature," David pointed out, "you usually enjoy it more as you continue rereading it. This is because there's a continual sense of rediscovery, and you measure yourself against the work as you reread it over the years" (1:45).

He cited the experience that people have had rereading a work like *King Lear*. When one reads the work, say when one is 15, 25, 35 and so forth, one has a profound and interesting experience at each reading. One always discovers new things

in the material of a good book. In contrast, he said, "If you deal with more pedestrian literature, usually once is enough, if you can endure reading it that one time."

David has come to the conclusion that "There's a delicacy and suggestiveness through literature that can only be exploited through continued rereading, so the ability to reread something with the right enjoyment really is a pretty good test of good literature" (1:46).

When asked about how to deal with individual subjective taste in dealing with the concept of re-readability as a test of literary quality, David expressed the optimism that over the long haul, many subjective tendencies are ironed out. He conceded that while one individual can alter the views toward the canon (consider T. S. Eliot's influence in making the metaphysical poets seem much more interesting and important than they seemed before his generation), over the long haul there are so many people engaged in literary studies that the real quality will probably be recognized for the most part by the most people.

Pedagogical Approaches

As has already been observed, on any given class day, David could either be seen standing in front of the entire class talking to the class, or more likely circulating among the small groups of students who were discussing the day's assignment. David explained that one reason he used group activities as much as he did was that if he talked for 45 minutes, "the students probably aren't going to remember a lot of what I say." He cautioned that this statement is not to disparage lecturing, because "lecturing has its merits, and if it's well done it can be exciting, but it takes an enormous amount of work

to prepare 25 good lectures for a quarter" (1:54). He explained further why he used the small groups more than lectures:

> I figure that if I use 10 to 15 minutes trying to point out what I think are the most important things I'm giving them a quantity of information that they can deal with. . . . This is information I'm really concerned about and think they ought to be concerned about too. So, instead of trying to talk to them about 10 important things, say about O'Connor's *Parker's Back*, I choose three. And if they get to understand those three things well, they can understand part or all the rest of the book on their own. And I try and get them to put into practice interpretive techniques in class. If I don't give them the chance to practice that process, create the atmosphere for it, they don't get used to expressing their opinions and have the chance for interchange. (1:55).

David believes that the teacher creates the atmosphere for the students to follow, and even though some students take the initiative on their own to talk to others about their reading, he told me, "I try to put students in the place where they have that congenial atmosphere where they're going to have a chance to practice saying their opinions to other people, hearing other people talk, so they get more voice, more variety in the class, and a chance to do participation themselves rather than just perception" (1:55).

Philosophy of Evaluation

When I inquired about David's philosophy of evaluation, he was quick to point out that he did not have it all together yet. "It's evolving," he said. While he was an undergraduate student, he remembered one of his teachers remarking that a test should not be just a regurgitation process but a learning experience in itself, meaning that the student should be forced not to just come back with stuff they have learned but to actually do the learning and integration on the test. "I've tried to think about test

questions that don't get students to just repeat knowledge," David observed, "but to get them to create knowledge while they're doing it" (1:56).

David pointed out that he evaluated significantly differently for the Literary Analysis class than he did other literature classes. In survey literature classes (e.g. American or English) he emphasized that he has tried hard to make a difficult evaluation instrument that separates out students on a wide spectrum. "I have had literature classes where everybody got a score between 85 and 100 on exams, and the top person and the bottom person had only a small amount of differentiation." In the last two years of his survey classes, David said he has been able to create a meaningful differentiation between top and bottom students. He felt he has done that successfully in a way which really spreads out the students (1:56). But David insisted that he did not grade with an artificial curve in mind. "Always I make sure that the students know what the standards are, how they'll be graded, how they should prepare for the exam so they'll be clear about what I was trying to get them to achieve. I am always clear about helping them to do that." So, students who want to be successful have the opportunity to be successful, he added.

The situation is a little different with the Literary Analysis class. David noted that, with the possible exception of the exam on poetry which closely followed the outline of his survey classes, students were evaluated on their responses in the four essays described in the course requirements. About a week before any essay was due, students were given a sheet of paper with ideas or sample essay questions (see Appendix D). From this list of questions the students selected the question which appealed to them and they responded to it.

When the students turned in their essays, David made it a point to grade them without knowing the student names wherever possible. He did this in one of two ways. He either asked students to type their names at the back of the last sheet of their paper, or write their ID numbers on the top right corner of the front page. He later matched the number with the name of the student. This way he never knew whose paper he was grading. He agreed with Steven Cahn, who, in *Ethics in Academia*, discusses ways in which student names' influence grading. Removing the name "cleared the teacher's mind to focus more clearly on what was being said without any personal concerns distracting [them] from what [they are] doing" (1:58). David believed that he owed the students a fair evaluation (what he terms "an expert's point of view") about how well they were accomplishing the goals of the class. He felt he could do this better if he was impartial, objective, and impersonal.

A Sense of Goal Accomplishment

When I asked David how he developed a sense that what he was trying to do in class was getting through to his students, he responded that he relied mainly on the papers the students turned in and minimally on the result of the one exam on poetry. He said he tried to get the students away from the habit of consulting critics about what they were reading and reporting what the critics say in their paper. "I expect them to look at the works themselves to see what potential there is in them. I want them to experience how those works fit in with other works of literature" (1:51).

This, for David, was a good measure that students understood what he was trying to accomplish. When the students demonstrated that they knew the works and they understood the implications of the works, David felt that "some of the things [he had]

been trying to communicate have gotten through." David said he now understands that "the teacher is like the sower who went out to sow. Some of the things he says in class will stick, others will not." But even those ideas that do not appear to stick are not to be totally discounted, he counseled. Because

> in a certain sense, it's not specific knowledge about a specific text that I want them to remember for the rest of their lives. That's not realistic, and not even the right goal to have. It is the process of working with the text and pulling out the implications. . . . That's the thing that I'm most concerned about getting across, and if my students demonstrate on their exam or through their papers that they understand that, then I know something must be going on well in the class. (1:52)

To David, the understanding of the "process" is essential because he believes that when the students understand the process, they acquire the tools that enable them to unlock whatever literary text they may encounter in their later experience.

Critical Theory and Current Trends

David's quick answer to how he keeps up with trends in the profession was "Not as well as I should" (1:64), but he divided the avenues for keeping up into two groups: those he is able to pursue and those he is not. Going to meetings and conferences is one of the prime ways of doing the latter, and David indicated that he took advantage of the opportunity to attend such conferences to broaden his awareness of current trends in the profession. He talked at length of his experiences at the NEA Institute last summer where he did quite a bit of discussing of literature theory with a teacher at American University of Washington. He informed me that this person was a specialist who has published extensively on Deconstruction. "I had read one of his books and we talked about a literary theory class he taught, so I did some catching up there" (1:66).

David also used his Literary Analysis class as a stimulus to probe into new theories. He explained that each year when he teaches the Literary Analysis class he tries to introduce new material, "which means I have to cover some material myself" (1:65). To illustrate this he described how he went about preparing to teach the Literary Analysis class as far as reading material is concerned.

> I just selected the books I'll use the next time I teach the class. I'm using books I've used in the past to some extent; classic books like Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*, Jonathan Pollard's *Structuralist Criticism* and Richardson's *The Purloin Poe*. However, this year I'm going to read essays in the *Purloin Poe* which I've never read before, and I'm using a new book, Helena Mickie's *The Flesh Made Word: Female Figure's in Woman's Bodies*. . . . Her book is an example of a combination of feminist perspective and New Historicism. New Historicism is probably the biggest movement now in the profession since Post-Structuralism. At conferences that is the only thing everybody seems to talk about; so I've decided to delve into it. (1:67)

David observed that he does not learn much from his colleagues in the department, and he suggested that this might be because of their different interests. He explained further;

> I don't really learn much from my colleagues not because they have nothing to teach me but because we hardly talk about literary theory. If anything we might talk about pedagogical methods or what we are teaching and stuff like that, but we don't really have that time for intellectual interchange. (1:71)

David recalled, however, team-teaching literary perspectives with a colleague last year. They both read and taught from Graff's *Professing Literature*, an experience he called a "mutually enriching interchange" (1:69).

College English, which David noted he read "once in an infrequent while," has been supplanted by *Profession*, an MLA annual publication along the same lines as *College English*, on David's journal reading list.

David's comments about how he applies some of the critical theories germane to this study are discussed in the subsequent pages. David finds a certain amount of Structuralist influence in the way he does genre study in his Literary Analysis class. He surmised that:

> By the time we study four or five short stories we start studying not just individual stories but conventions of the genre and how those conventions allow individual stories to take on meaning, which is a sort of a structuralist legacy of studying genre and not being so concerned with the individual interpretation of the story you're reading but about how short stories themselves take on meaning against the background of the coded system of meaning that's created by a genre. (1:72)

Concerning the application of Reader-Response theory in his class, David pointed out that to some extent the core of this theory is apparent in any class where there is discussion, and responses to and by students. He explained that what a teacher does is to try and elicit responses and generate discussion among the students about why they respond the way they do, and perhaps what responses make sense and what do not. "So in an informal way, Reader-Response takes place in my class all the time. It is initiated by the art of reading itself and continued by my exploitation in discussing the different responses that people make to their reading" (1:70).

But there is also a more formal approach to the question of Reader Response theory, which David isolated as taking place when he tries "to get the students to specifically focus in a paper on how the reader is positioned or moved along in response to the text" (1:70). Another context where Reader-Response theory comes up for formal discussion in his class, he noted, is when there is a discussion about whether a text has objective meaning or whether the meaning is totally determined by the reader as well as the sort of literary critical controversies that focus around the issue of where meaning lies (1:70).

David thinks the concept of New Criticism is very pervasive and influential in his Literary Analysis class, (as well as, he added, "many other literature classes"), (1:62) because student papers written in this class are isolated individual interpretations of specific works not seen in relation necessarily to other works, either from a historical association or through source methodology.

David said he does very little with Deconstruction at the undergraduate level because at that level he does not think students have been prepared to deal with the sophisticated notions the concept raises. He explained that the philosophical tenets of Deconstruction make the idea valueless until other ideas have been laid in place in the student's mind. He emphasized:

> A student has to have a basic sense of how to do New Criticism, of how some Structuralist and Reader-Response ideas work before they can appreciate the concept. Because you can't start taking apart a work until you have seen how it is put together. You can't start looking for inconsistencies in the things that don't fit together until you have assembled the shape. (1:77)

David observed that he does not consciously teach with any particular theory in mind. "If I've been reading on a particular theory, sometimes I try to see how it works, but most of the time I pretty much let the issues that interest me in the work dictate how I approach the work," (1:66), he said. But he stated that he is "pretty" conscious of feminist understandings of literature and generally tries to represent it fairly, noting that in his Literary Analysis class issues of gender are directly or indirectly raised in almost every story, and "we usually do some discussion of these" (1:78).

The Student: Julian Moyers

Background and Expectations

Julian is a sophomore whose interest in reading and literature goes as far back as she can remember. She credited her parents, whom she called "high achievers," for providing her with a lot of reading materials. She likes adventure books best and the short story in particular, conjecturing that the "short nature of the short story brings out the best from the author" (1:63). But these preferences aside, Julian would read any book "that shows that its author had something profound to say. It could be philosophy, theology, science, anything that shows extraordinary ability on the part of its creator" (1:72).

Even though Julian talked highly of the subject of literature, she did not plan to major in it or plan a career that directly involved the subject. "I want to be a lawyer," she reflected, "and I think books are the mainstay of the everyday life of the lawyer. Literature comes in very handy" (1:66).

That explained how Julian chose her courses. Literary analysis is not required for her pre-law program, and she had already taken two other literature courses, but the title of the course interested her. "The lawyer analyzes a lot, I figure, and if this course will provide me with tools to do that, I reasoned it wouldn't be a bad idea, so I signed up for it." Asked how her expectations have been met, she replied hesitantly, "Somewhat. But then I had somewhat uninformed expectations. If there are any shortcomings it is probably on my part because the course proposed to do things differently from what I expected. And that isn't all that bad" (1:82).

Reaction to the Text before, during, and after Class

With regard to reading the assigned text, Julian thought she was very different from a lot of her classmates.

> For some reason I always make it a point to read the assigned material before the next class. Sometimes when an emergency throws my schedule off track I sacrifice sleep and read to the early hours of the day. Most of my coursemates aren't like that. They don't read if they can get away with it. What I prefer generally though is to read during the day and get a friend who has read the piece to argue about points of view. Usually I enjoy such one-to-one bantering more than what goes on in the class. And I've been known to express my emotions aloud even when I'm my own and only audience. (1:76)

In class she behaved differently, and she knew it.

> In class I try to listen more than talk, and since the teacher or the group leaders direct the flow of the discussions I try to see how things will end. I don't want to come across as knowing it all, because the potential is there to be perceived as such since a majority of the students have not read the material, and the few who have dominate the discussion. (1:77)

She admitted that it was only on a few occasions that she found herself wanting to reread the text for a clarification of her perceived reading. These were times when interpretations propounded in class seemed to be totally different from what she got from her initial reading. Usually, she claimed, she forgot about the class experience and went on to the next reading.

Defining "Good" Literature

Julian said she is uncomfortable with the word "good" when it refers to literature. She thinks there are difficulties with defining literary works with "good" and "bad" adjectives. She preferred the word "appeal." She thinks different books appeal to different people and just because a work does not appeal to one person, it should not

be labeled as "bad." She pointed out that often the works that appeal to her are intellectually challenging, and that sometimes in her classes they are required to read only certain portions or chapters of a book. "If the work is stimulating and academically challenging, I ignore the limitations and read the entire thing" (1:85).

Yet, Julian refused to make, what she calls "excellent content," be the criterion for a good book, insisting that it is not always what the authors say, but how they say it. "A case in point are the pieces in our anthology. A lot of the stories that I really enjoy are the ones that say things that are intellectually refreshing and still say what they have to say well, artistically" (1:85).

Getting Meaning from the Text

When asked how she generates meaning from her reading, Julian replied, "I don't know. I don't think I have figured out how to get meaning out of a work for the simple fact that I am usually so preoccupied with making sure I get a good grade in a class like this" (1:91). She also linked meaning generating with her emotional feelings:

> I can feel meaning but I haven't figured out how to express it. And I can feel like the gist of the story or what this guy is trying to say. I can feel that, but I can't express half of that feeling on paper. I've not been taught how to do that, how to get from that intense feeling state to expression of it. However, I have discovered that my expression of how I feel about the work is better if I can identify with the author, say E. E. Cummings, or the period, modern literature. (1:91)

For this reason, Julian thinks it is unhealthy for the teacher to provide the entire text to be studied. She suggested that the students should have a hand in the selection, at least a fourth of the material to be studied if they were using an anthology. She claimed that sometimes she got interested in other literary pieces in the anthology that were not prescribed, and often read them. "And when I do that I court frustration

because I can't share my thoughts about that particular work with anybody because it falls out of the canon for that particular class" (1:92).

Julian believes that it is part of the teacher's responsibility to help the student to go from what she called "the state of thinking that this is your textbook to this is my textbook" (1:91). In the absence of any such encouragement from the teacher, Julian conceded students have to take that step on their own. "There is a personal search for knowledge that should be encouraged, because in the absence of that all the student gets is a routine dishing out of what the teacher thinks is good for the student" (1:92).

Julian conjectured that the reason there is so much rote memorization and little reasoning on the part of students may be linked to the students' feeling of alienation from the process of textual selection.

> You tell yourself that this is what the teacher selected. He is interested in it so he must be interested in what he says about it. So come exam time, you make a big effort to recall for him what he said about the work. It becomes a very superficial experience. It is not me any more, but this is what I know I have to do to hopefully get the A. And I want the A. (1:101)

On Pedagogy

Julian said she looked forward to going to the Literary Analysis class primarily because it is one of the few classes where she knew there was the potential to listen to the voices of those other than the teacher. She appreciated the opportunity to discuss the works and at least say what they think of them. She called the situation "refreshing."

Julian also thought that there was room for improving the group discussion format.

> I know a lot of students who go by day after day, and week after week, not reading the assigned materials," she observed. "They sit in class and pretend that they know what's going on but they don't. I think the teacher should try and develop an incentive mechanism that will decrease the percentage of the group of students who do not read the material or do not participate in class. (1:99)

She suggested that a significant part of the grade should be based on class participation because then the students will at least read the material. She recognized that it is hard to accurately measure participation, but that is a problem that can be addressed or minimized by reducing class size, she stated. The classes should be small enough, she emphasized, that the teacher can get a sense of who is participating and who is not.

She is convinced that the "system" oversells the value of a grade and consequently many students are in class solely for the grade. "I don't think there is any doubt about that," she said with a wry smile. "If you doubt me, investigate the level of class attendance between classes where attendance is recorded daily and classes where no attendance is taken." She added, "While I think it's a shame that attendance records have to be kept to induce college students to attend class, I think that has to be done if we're serious about learning" (1:112).

The Literarily Competent

Julian drew a distinction between one's perception of competence and an objective, fact-based competence in literary matters. She asserted that it is hard to measure the former, and the latter is too superficially assessed to matter. She explained her assertions by observing that if we use the critics' evaluation of great works, a lot of the great authors have written works that failed, and that they failed more often than they succeeded. Many of the great authors wrote 10, 15, or even 20 works, she argued, and only 2 of them are considered great, so their reputation is based largely on those 2 books

that succeeded. "So it's difficult to measure competence because there is little consistency in art, and our interpretations of art are not very reliable either" (1:108).

Julian thinks literary competence can be determined but only on a lower level. A literarily competent person measured at this level should demonstrate a familiarity with the general field of literature and be able to pick up allusions to all aspects of the subject with a high degree of accuracy. She thinks such acquaintance should be broad, and then the individual should demonstrate a zeal and a pathos for the subject. "The more adept student shows that special passion and enthusiasm about literature that is contagious" (1:108).

Summary

In this chapter I described the Literary Analysis class taught by Dr. David Slocuum. Using the course, as the case I described the environment or context in which the class is taught, including the class composition, pedagogy, geography, and typical days.

I also described the nature of textual material used in the course regarding genre, length, and representativeness. Next, I described the teacher's educational and biographical background, and drawing largely on an extensive interview with him, his philosophy of literature and teaching.

Finally, I introduced Julian Moyers, a sophomore pre-law student who was taking the Literary Analysis class. I discussed Julian's attitude to a number of issues pertaining to the course, including her literary background, her reaction to her reality, how she generates meaning from the text, and who a literarily competent person is.

CHAPTER V

CASE TWO: STEPHEN BURKE'S AMERICAN LITERATURE II CLASS

This chapter reports the results of the study of ENGL 276, American Literature II (1865 to present), taught by Dr. Stephen Burke in the winter of 1991. Dr. Burke teaches in the Department of English at Insight University. The findings are based on the examination of three data: documents relating to the course, interviews, and observations of class sessions. The chapter describes the atmosphere in which students in Dr. Burke's American Literature II class were attempting to get a feel for and a sense of literature.

In this chapter, four main topics are investigated: the class setting of the course, the texts used in the course, the teacher, and a student taking the course. Several sub-topics relevant to these main issues are further discussed.

Description of Course and Assignments

The *1990-1991 Undergraduate Colleges Bulletin* of Insight University states simply that American Literature II (1865 to present) deals with "American Literature from the Civil War to the present" (p. 177). This rather broad description of the course is further expanded in the course description given to each student. In this course description, the teacher notes that:

> This period [1865 to present] is particularly rich in Realism, Imagism, Humor, local color, and Naturalism. The authors of this period compose a very eclectic and diverse group. Careful attention has been devoted to including minority and women writers. Often their viewpoints serve as counter-balances to popular notions of a male-dominated materialistic culture. Also, this period of American letters is replete with strident arguments on the evolving American consciousness. In particular, what are the consummate effects of rapid industrialization on American society? In other words, is there really an aspect of American consciousness that has not been touched or exploited by corporate imperialism. (see Appendix E)

On the first day of class, Dr. Burke used more than one-half the period explaining what was required of students in the class. He repeatedly told the students to write down and "never forget" what he called "the two big commandments" of the class. "To earn an A in this class," he told them, "you have to do these two things":

1. The student has to be in class daily. But that alone is not enough, he cautioned. To fulfill the spirit of this law, the student should not only be in class, but should also be alert to what happens in class. "Be awake! Sit up! Be excited about writing. Be interested in writing," he told the students.

2. The student should read the assigned reading for that day before coming to class. He warned that he does not like pop quizzes, but if he perceived that students were coming to class unprepared, he would resort to pop quizzes to correct that lack (2:2).

On the first class day, Dr. Burke reiterated what is stated in the course description that the final grade is derived "from four to five 100-point exams. . . . Normally, these exams are about 40% objective and 60% essay" (2:2). Concerning the general mechanics of grading, Dr. Burke explained "I want you to know from the beginning that I don't grade on the curve. There is no curve. I don't believe in curves. The practice has never made sense to me" (2:2).

When asked about the general nature of his exams other than that they are objective and essay type, he mimicked the voice of the thundering preacher, "The concepts! The concepts! In this class," he continued, "you must be able to reduce everything you know to a concept. You must be able to conceptualize" (2:3). He also added that tests will include identification of authors and titles, and that students should always think in terms of comparisons and contrasts. "Why is this piece like the other piece, and unlike that and that piece? What did this author say on this topic that compares and contrasts to what the other author said on that or a similar topic" (2:3,4).

Class Setting

Classroom

Dr. Burke's American Literature II class met in the chemistry amphitheater in the Science Complex for the quarter. The Science Complex is roughly two blocks away from the Arts building, and since most of the students in the class took other classes in the Arts building the period preceding the American Literature II class, they tended to attribute their frequent tardiness to the fact that they had to walk too far to get to the next class. The main reason this literature class had to be taught in the science building was that the amphitheater was the only classroom large enough to accommodate the number of students who generally register for ENGL 276.

The chemistry amphitheater has 167 fixed seats. The room is shaped in the form of a cone with the larger end beginning at the back. There are two entrances to the room both of which close automatically. The 167 seats in the room sit on 8 of the 14 stairs that lead from back to front. There is a large opening in the middle of the back row of seats that allows students access to the middle seats, so that students do not have

to get to the middle seats from the ends. This opening terminates at the fifth row so the first three rows of seats from the front can be accessed only by walking from the far ends of the room. Students who came to class early generally tended to sit at the end seats, and those who came in later had to dribble their way between seats and legs to go to the middle seats. And whether students who came in late did not enjoy the processes involved with getting to the middle seats of the first three front rows or they just preferred to sit elsewhere, a situation developed where students filled the five rows at the back and the first two or three seats on both ends of the three front seats, leaving a large empty space in the middle of the first three rows.

On both sides of the main entrance is a 3-ft aisle that descends 14 steps down to the teacher's desk. Down in the front of the class is a platform about 1-foot high where the teacher's "desk", equipped with sink and faucet, is positioned.

Behind the desk is a 4 ft x 13 ft blackboard. For some reason, Dr. Burke tripped over the step to the platform on several occasions when he had to get to the blackboard. It appears that he became very self-conscious of the trippings because as the quarter progressed, the number of times he climbed the platform to the board decreased.

On the walls of the classroom were various pictures and teaching aids including the chemistry periodic table. These teaching aids constantly reminded those prone to forget that the room was designed for chemistry.

Meeting Times

The class met four times in the week because it is a four-credit course. Class days were Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9:30 to 10:20 a.m. Each class period was 50 minutes. For the quarter, the class met approximately 40 times.

Class Composition

During the quarter of my study, 80 students enrolled and completed the course. Of the 80 students, 47 were white Caucasians, 11 were Asians, 3 Hispanics and 19 were Blacks. This means there were a total of 33 (or 40%) minority students taking the course. The average age of the students was 21. Their ages ranged from 17 to 41. When the class was broken down according to sex, there were 48 women and 32 men. The students who enrolled for the course also comprised all the class groups in the undergraduate program: 19 first-year students, 31 sophomores, 17 juniors, 12 seniors, and 1 PTC (Permission to Take Class).

Typical Periods

From the first day of class until the last day, Dr. Burke's class followed a consistent pattern, and even though the specific teaching and learning activities differed in details, the broad structures were the same. A visitor to the class was likely to decipher three distinct segments in the class--the period before class began, the first five to ten minutes devotion time, followed by the lecture. I will describe a typical class period following this chronological sequence of events.

Five Minutes before Class

If one visited Dr. Burke's American Literature II class about five minutes before the official 9:30 a.m. class time on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, one would have most likely joined a thick crowd going in and out of the chemistry amphitheater. A large chemistry class preceded the American Literature class, so at about 9:25 a.m. the students from that class were making their way out of the room

while the incoming literature students were entering. It was not uncommon to witness or hear students from opposing classes hurl insults at each other. The chemistry students repeatedly made it clear to their literature counterparts that they did not belong in the science building. In the words of one militant chemistry student, "Chemistry and literature are as far apart as the sun is from the earth, and the twain should never meet."

Once the commotion at the entrance was resolved, the literature students found their way into the seats recently vacated. The first seats to fill were the back rows. The ends of the front row seats were the last to be taken, leaving the middle seats in the three front rows unoccupied, shunned like the plague.

The class was never near capacity at 9:25 a.m. Students strolled in and out for the most part of the period. The only days when the class filled before 9:30 a.m. were days when exams were scheduled. On those days students often grabbed the nearest seat and leafed through either their textbooks or their notes. On non-exam class days, however, the early students just visited with their friends until the teacher called the class to order.

9:30 a.m. Class Begins

In the 23 times that I visited Dr. Burke's class, not once was he in class during the five minutes before class officially began. He almost always came in a minute before or after the beginning of class. He taught an 8:30 a.m.-9:20a.m. class in the English Department building on the same days he taught the American Literature II class, so he had a distance to cover to get to class.

When Dr. Burke entered the amphitheater, you knew it because he always announced his presence with a loud greeting the moment he got in. He then literally

made a dash from the back steps to the front row from where he repeated his greetings. Very often he sat on the platform in front of the class and caught his breath before he started with the business of the period. After calling a few students by name and engaging in short semi-private conversation with them, he proceeded to what he called "the thought of the day."

The Devotion

The five-to-ten minutes devotion was an integral part of Dr. Burke's teaching. He always came to class with two things, the class text and a worn-out Good News Bible. On the first day of class he told the students, "One of the things that I enjoy the most in this class is it gives me the chance to talk about Jesus" (2:16).

Dr. Burke's talks about Jesus were in the form of daily devotional thoughts. He usually started the devotions by reading a Bible passage. After that he announced the thought for the day. On one occasion (January 14, 1991) the passage was about Job and his riches. The thought for the day--these thoughts were usually expressed as aphorisms--was, the more one blessed others, the more one is blessed. "It is not the money, it's the service. It's not what you have, but what you do with it" (2:4). On another occasion (January 7, 1991), the devotional thought centered on the inclusiveness of God, the main idea being that "everybody is welcome to Him" (2:16).

The devotional thoughts were not necessarily planned to compliment any day's class activities, but they had a great calming influence, thereby setting the right atmosphere for each class day.

Dr. Burke, who also has a minor in religious studies in his undergraduate program, defends his devotional practices on the grounds that Insight University is a

parochial institution whose philosophy of education recognizes and espouses the central place of religion, specifically Christianity, in a well-rounded education. And considering that Dr. Burke generally had the most captive audience during his devotions, five or ten class minutes devoted to what one student referred to as "Dr. Burke's oratorical overflows" was considered generally, by both students and teacher, as time well spent. The devotions always ended with a prayer by Dr. Burke.

The Lecture[1]

Biographical sketch

Dr. Burke's lectures followed a set routine. His reading list was made up of short stories (or excerpts of lengthy works) and short poems. But whether he taught the poem or the short story, Dr. Burke began with a biographical sketch of the author. Usually the class text provided a sketch of the author's biography along with their works, but Dr. Burke always gave additional biographical information. Often the biographical information he added to the one supplied by the book provided a more balanced portrayal of the author. For example, when he discussed the works of Robert Frost, he added that Robert Frost was known to have beaten his wife on several occasions. The students picked up on what to them was a surprising bit of information and discussed Robert Frost's works in the light of that information. They were surprised that a man who wrote "all those beautiful nature poems with beautiful religious symbols" would lift a finger to beat his wife.

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[1]See appendix A for a complete lecture.

Following the discussion of the author's biographical information, Dr. Burke discussed the story or the poem. If the piece was a short story he essentially asked the students to explain what the story is about. Sometimes he inquired about the essence of the story from the point of view of the author, and other times from the point of view of the narrator. Once a consensus was reached about what the story was about, Dr. Burke continued by virtually retelling the story chronologically. He interspersed his narration with verbatim readings from portions of the story to buttress a line of reasoning or emphasize a point.

Dr. Burke's approach to the poems he taught was similar to the short stories, as far as inquiring about the theme. Using a slightly different approach, he read the entire poem a couple of times before asking the students to discuss the theme. When asked about the different approaches, he told me that the poem is compact enough to allow such preview and he felt it was beneficial for the students to have every word in perspective before talking about it.

Nature of questions

Even though Dr. Burke's voice is the predominant voice in the class (often the only voice), he sometimes asked his students questions about the details of the story. Usually the questions were rhetorical because he supplied the answers before the students had a chance to ponder over them. But when the questions were not rhetorical, the answers did not call for deliberation, requiring either factual answers or one-word responses.

A good example of Dr. Burke's questioning style and corresponding student responses in the American Literature II class is provided from a discussion of William Dean Howell's "Editha." This is how the introduction went:

> [Dr. Burke] How does "Editha" open, class? How does the story open? What has happened to him? "The air was thick with the war feeling." What attitude is expressed in that? What tone? "The air was thick."
> [Student] Tension
> [Dr. Burke] Tension. What else?
> [Another student] Excitement.
> [Dr. Burke] Excitement.
> [A third student] Anticipation.
> [Dr. Burke] Anticipation. Okay class? So the narrator is setting us up right away. "Like the electricity of a storm which has not yet burst."

Application to contemporary life situation

Dr. Burke always consciously applied the "lesson" or theme of each reading to some aspect of contemporary life situation. He explained that some of the literary pieces that are considered to be classics are so foreign to contemporary minds, especially undergraduates, that the students feel alienated from the materials they are required to read.

> So in discussing "Editha," you do so by discussing the Gulf War which is on everybody's mind at the moment. You compare the way war was glorified in the era "Editha" is capturing with the way war is romanticized today. And you always get a response, if not about "Editha," it will be about the application, but either way I get the students to look at the issues being addressed in the piece. (2:4)

And he did. Students generally participated in the class when images that they related to were invoked. Such images were often selected from contemporary situations and ranged from politics to life-style to religion. The theme of the piece always seemed to provide the right illustration.

Defining literary terms

Another common practice Dr. Burke used during his lectures was to exploit aspects of the materials being read to define literary terminologies and concepts. He never assumed that the students knew the meanings of technical literary terms.

For example, in the discussion of the theme--which he had explained as being the "central idea" or "meaning" of the poem or story--of "Editha," Dr. Burke stated that William Dean Howells was using a fictional story to make a statement or express a point of view about war. He used this situation to explain what literature does to the reader. "The interesting thing about literature is that not only does it make us appreciate the statement it makes, but it also enables us to enjoy the truthfulness of the art form" (2:16).

Similarly, when he used the term "climax" while explaining the sequences of events in "Editha," he immediately juxtaposed a definition: "Climax is where the conflict is resolved, the point of the highest dramatic tension" (2:18). He did the same thing when he found himself using the term "protagonist" in the following reference.

> Our protagonist in this story is . . . by the way there is a difference between a protagonist and hero. Usually the two terms are used synonymously, but there is a fine line between them. A protagonist is the character in the story who embodies the values we approve of and therefore we root for such a character. His or her point of view does not necessarily have to prevail at the end of the story, that is, such a one does not always have to win the boy or girl or survive the war or any such symbol of victory. Even if they lose the boy or girl or die in the battle, the reader still approves of what they embodied. We can't say the same of the "hero." The traditional hero often wins at the end and doesn't always win fairly. (2:24)

By defining literary terms as they entered into the discussion of the reading materials, Dr. Burke made it easier for those not familiar with the terms to learn them in context.

Dr. Burke usually continued teaching until the bell stopped him, but on days when he conducted sectional exams, he allowed the students to leave when they finished with the test. I sat through three of the five scheduled exams for the course and on all three occasions all the students finished their exams in less than 30 minutes.

The Text

Dr. Burke readily conceded that he considers himself a revisionist, at least in the way he looked at what was considered great in American literature. He was proud that he was doing something to correct the benign neglect of certain segments of American literature in the past, declaring with enthusiasm that "In this class we have now begun to change the canon" (2:7). He explained that he has deliberately tried to be more inclusive in the selection of text for the period. "There is more ethnic type, native American type representation than it was in the past" (2:6).

The class textbook was volume 2 of the 3rd edition of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. This anthology has been called the standard of comparison for all American literature survey texts. The 2,856-page volume is divided into four chronological sections: American literature 1865-1914, American literature between the wars (1914-1915), American prose since 1945, and American poetry since 1975. The editors, however, took the liberty to include Whitman and Dickinson whose writing chronologically fits into this period in the first volume "in order to allow for more room in the second for important writings of the recent past" (Baym et al., p. xxix).

Altogether, the anthology includes the writings of 125 authors from all sectors of American society. The works of these authors also span the gamut of literary culture; they include both long and short prose writings, poetry of all imaginable kinds, and a

sizeable representation of dramatic works. Thirty-nine of the 125 writers whose works appear in the anthology are women. It is from this text that Dr. Burke selected the authors and works that were studied in his class. Table 5 shows the breakdown of Dr. Burke's selections:

TABLE 5

AMERICAN LITERATURE READING LIST

Year Pub.	Title	Author	Sex of Author	Author's Ethnic Origin
1865	"The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County"			
1870	"Letters to William Brown"			
1872	From *Roughing It*	S. L. Clemens	M	WHN
1869	"The Outcasts of Poker Flat"	Bret Harte	M	Jewish
1889	"Chickamanga"	Ambrose Bierce	M	WHN
1905	"Editha"	W. D. Howells	M	WNH
1878	"Daisy Miller: A Study"	Henry James	M	WNH
1886	"A White Heron"	Sarah Jewett	F	WNH
1891	"The Revolt of 'Mother'"	Mary Freeman	F	WNH
1887	"Free Joe and the Rest of the World"	Joel Harris	M	WNH
1887	"The Goophered Grapevine"	Charles Chasnutt	M	Black
1901	From *Up From Slavery*	Booker T. Washington	M	Black

Table 5--Continued

1902	From *The Souls of Black Folk*	W. E. B. DuBois	M	Black
1898	"The Bride Comes to Yellow Slay"			
1899	"An Episode of War"	Stephen Crane	M	WNH
1900	"From Sister Carrie"	Theodore Dreiser	M	WNH
1889	"Under the Lion's Paw"	Hamlin Garland	M	WNH
1901	"The Law of Life"	Jack London	M	WNH
1907	From *The Education of Henry Adams*	Henry Adams	M	WNH
1900	"School Days and Indian Teacher"	Gertrude S. Bonniin	F	Native American
1932	From *Black Elk Speaks*	Black Elk	M	Native American
1915	"Serepta Mason"	Edgar Lee Masters	M	WNH
1915	"Trainor, the Drug Gist"			
1915	"Doc Hill"			
1915	"Margaret Fuller Slack"			
1915	"Abel Melveny"			
1915	"Lucenda Matlock"			
1927	"Eatonville Anthology"	Zora Neal Hurston	F	Black
1896	"The House on the Hill"			
1896	"Richard Cory"			
1896	"The Clerks"			
1920	"The Mill"			
1921	"Mr. Flood's Party"	Edwin A. Robinson	M	WNH
1928	"Neighbour Rosicky"	Willa Cather	F	WNH
1914	"Mending Wall"	Robert Frost	M	WNH
1914	"The Wood-Pile"			

Table 5--Continued

1914	"The Road Not Taken"			
1936	"Departmental"			
1923	"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"			
1919	"From Winsburg, Ohio"	Sherwood Anderson	M	WNH
1914	"Chicago"	Carl Sandburg	M	WNH
1916	"Halsted Street Car"			
1916	"Fog"			
1918	"Cool Tombs"			
1918	"Grass"			
1923	"The Snow Man"	Wallace Stevens	M	WNH
1931	"Disillusionment of Ten O'Clock"			
1923	"Annecdote of the Tour"			
1954	"A Quiet Normal Life"			
1931	"The Death of a Soldier"			
1916	"The Young Housewife"	William Carlos Williams	M	WNH
1923	"The Red Wheelbarrow"			
1927	"The Dead Baby"			
1930	"Death"			
1924	"To the Stone-Cutters"	Robinson Jeffers	M	WNH
1919	"November Surf"			
1951	"Camel Point"			
1913	"A Pact"	Ezra Pound	M	WNH
1912	"To Whisler, America"			
1913	"The Rest"			
1913	"In a Station of the Metro"			
1920	"Buffalo Bill's"	E. E. Cummings	M	WNH
1926	"Nobody Loses All the Time"			
1926	Next to of Course God America I"			
1923	"Never May the Fruit Be Plucked"	Edna St. Vincent Millay	M	WNH

Table 5—Continued

1923	"What Lips Have Kissed, and Where and Why"			
1922	"Winter Dreams"	F. Scott Fitzgerald	M	WNH
1938	"Barn Burning"	William Faulkner	M	WNH
1939	"The Man Who Was Almost a Man"	Richard Wright	M	Black
1925	"Indicent"	Countee Cullen	M	Black
1922	"Mother to Son"			
1927	"Mulatto"	Langston Hughes	M	Black
1945	"The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner"	Randall Tarrell	M	WNH
1945	"A Song in the Front Yard"	Gwendolyn Brooks	F	Black
1945	"The Vacant Lot"			
1945	"The Mother"			
1973	"Everyday Use"	Alice Walker	F	Black
1945	"The Leader of the People"	John Steinbeck	M	WNH
1955	"Good Country People"	Flannery O'Connor	F	WNH

*WNH = White, Non-Hispanic

Representativeness of Text Used

By sex of author

An analysis of the texts Dr. Burke used in his class showed that only 9 out of the 40 authors whose works he selected for his class were by women. This is 22% of the total number of authors selected, and less than the percentage of women who are

represented (roughly 31%) in the anthology used for the course. Considering the fact that Dr. Burke considers himself as reversing past practices by including more women authors in the course, the number of women authors discussed is disappointingly low. The numbers look even worse when we consider that of the 79 works used in the class only 12 were by women.

By ethnic origin

Another element of the course that Dr. Burke claims he has consciously tried to change from past practices of teaching American literature is the expansion of the canon. He claimed that in the selection of the text for the course he included "more ethnic type, native American type representation" than what was included in the past. But here, as with the analysis of authors by sex, it appears that the expansion of the canon that Dr. Burke talked about is modest indeed.

Of the 40 authors he selected, the minority represented the best was Blacks, of which there were 9. There were only two other minority groups who were represented: two native American authors and an American Jew. Altogether the minority representation is less than a third of the number of authors studied. Even though the class textbook included works by other minority groups of Hispanic and Asian origin, none of their works were used. Because the teacher directed attention to the lack of minority text in American literature studies, one might have expected better than only a 30% representation.

By period

The editors of the textbook divided the text into three main periods, the period after the Civil War to the beginning of the First World War (1865 to 1914), the period between the World Wars (1914-1945), and the period since the end of the Second World War. They devote roughly the same amount of textual material to each of these three periods. The same cannot be said of the texts selected for Dr. Burke's class.

Of the 79 works he selected for study, only 9 are from the period after 1945, even though there are more selections of poetry and prose works in the class anthology from this period than any of the other two. The period with the most representation is the period between the two World Wars with 43 pieces. The period from the Civil War to the beginning of World War I was represented by 27 pieces.

The Teacher: Dr. Burke

Literary Background and Teaching Experience

Dr. Burke is currently an Associate Professor of English at Insight University. He started teaching English courses at Insight 14 years ago shortly after completing his Ph.D. in English from a reputable mid-western university. His area of emphasis is ethnic literature, a course he teaches mainly to graduate students. On the undergraduate level, he teaches classes mainly in composition and American literature.

Asked about when he became interested in literature, Dr. Burke's recollection went only as far as his college days. He noted that he was not "a particularly great reader" when he was in high school. Yet, he recalled being "good" in the humanities: "My parents are both educated, so I was somehow educated at home. I did very well

in high school in Spanish and in the humanities. So in that sense I've probably always had a latent interest in literature" (2:67).

Dr. Burke had gone to college to become a gospel minister, until he met someone who later became his favorite teacher of all time, Dr. Sanburg. "Dr. Sanburg is the best thing that has ever happened to me. He opened my eyes to the beauties of the literary world in ways that made me forget about my intentions to become a gospel minister" (2:59). Dr. Burke recalled that the one thing that spurred him to cross over from appreciating literature to making teaching the subject his career goal was the variety of interpretation.

> I appreciate ambiguity. I like to walk about knowing that there is space all around me. In a way that is how I see literature. You can interpret a literary piece in several ways. In the sciences, the law of gravity will always be the law of gravity. It is specific, unchanging and constant. But what an author is saying, or what the author did not say, or should have said--these are subject to different interpretations and even negotiation. It is that multifacetedness about the subject that fascinated me and still does. (2:62)

In spite of the "deep" insights he obtained about literature while he was obtaining the BA degree, he was shocked by how little he knew about the subject when he went to graduate school. Dr. Burke's undergraduate program was undertaken in a parochial church-affiliated institution that had its own canon.

> I later determined that the school's literary canon was more famous for what was excluded from it than what it contained. We had no Shakespeare, no drama, no fiction. To this day I don't know how the program survived as long as it did without these. (2:76)

In tracing the steps of his literary sojourns, therefore, Dr. Burke alluded to Paul by likening his undergraduate literary education to feeding on milk and his graduate school experiences to eating meat.

> I am very grateful for the introduction I had to literary things in my undergraduate education, grateful for the milk, but in graduate school I could not rely on it for background. I had to do background studies in Shakespeare and all the others on my own while coping with the demands of graduate work. That is what I call meat, more than meat. (2:78)

Philosophy of Literature

When I talked with Dr. Burke about his philosophy of literature, it soon became clear that his daily pre-lecture devotional segments were not done just to assuage the conscience of a renegade minister. The devotions appeared to be a natural extension of his philosophy of literature. As he emphasized to me during an interview:

> My personal philosophy of literature, as well as all creative art, is that in that way we are most like God. Literature is the practice of the unseen, the undefined, the spiritual. Therefore its meanings are manifold. There is no one single definition. (2:83)

On another occasion when I asked him to elaborate on the above notion of literature, Dr. Burke drew a comparison between the art of creating literature with the process of discovery. "The more I read, the more I discover--about myself, about my fellow human beings, about our relationship one to another" (2:94). It is this ability of literature to open up new doors and direct the reader to new horizons that Dr. Burke considers to be God-like. "Literature stands as perhaps one of the highest ways we reflect God's personality and character. God is, I believe, ever expanding. God has not just made one earth. He is still making earths in his universe. And literature shares in that expansion" (2:95).

The Literarily Competent

Dr. Burke observed that it is almost impossible to be well read any more because if one has to read what is in the *New York Times* bestseller list one could "go

crazy." "So for good or for ill, one has to be a specialist--in fiction, poetry, etc." (2:72). Consequently, Dr. Burke's notion of a literarily competent person is that such a person's competence should not be evidenced so much by how much they read, or what they read, but in the way they read, what he described as "the way they bring their experiences to the literary piece" (2:72).

If there should be a criterion for judging competence, Dr. Burke thinks it should relate to how old themes are reinvented and made relevant. He cited Alice Walker's "Daily Use," a story about an old quilt which actually deals with sibling rivalry. He pointed out that there's nothing new about the theme, but that how she handled it is what makes her piece attractive. "So I don't think to say that you've read *Ulysses* or *War and Peace* or any such huge books mean anything," he explained. "Rather, what is important is, how do you inform yourself about the works you do read, and how do they give you a larger sense of these realities of human truth" (2:73-74).

Benefits of Literature

Dr. Burke is of the opinion that literature is far more valuable than is generally thought to be. In the excerpt below he outlined several reasons why literature is probably the most taken-for-granted subject:

1. Literature, at first is amazement. By that I mean, unless you are totally disconnected from yourself, if you read a piece of literature, you will find other characters and settings that you can identify with. That is amazement. You become amazed.

2. Literature offers one the opportunity of not being only amazed about oneself, but amazed at others unlike oneself that you can never talk to. Let's take William Wordsworth for example. I can never talk to him, but by reading his work, I can get to know him fairly well.

3. Literature, a lot of times, is important not for what is said, but for what is not said. What is said or left unsaid concerns the choices that the author made. For example, in the parable of the Prodigal Son Jesus said the younger son went into a far country and there wasted his living in riotous substance. It's one sentence. But imagine what He did not say. Why didn't Christ list the whole thing, everything he possibly could have done--wine, drugs, gambling. So a careful reading of literature invites the student reader to ask questions about choices, the power and combination of different kinds of choices.

4. Literature, ultimately, is one of the most pleasurable exercises in analytical thinking because it asks the question "Why?" Why is this character here and not there? These are all very powerful reasons for the value of literature, but just in case you prefer a value tinged with the color of money, I will direct you to studies that show that literature students do well in law schools and medical schools. So the attention to analytical details--why this happens and why this does not happen--fostered in literary studies is the basis of great insight. (2:82-83)

Encountering and Deriving Meaning from the Text

Dr. Burke's approach to the text has gone through several phases. During what he calls "the old days" (the era soon after he started teaching at Insight), he recalls his approach was "downright sociological." "The questions that directed my reading revolved around the place setting of the reading" (2:91). In reading Jack London, for example, he remembers concentrating about the times then--the atmosphere and world London depicted.

But he soon abandoned this approach and adopted the biographical/analytical approach. Utilizing this method, he asked questions about Jack London's life and the possible experiences out of which he wrote. But this approach did not last either. He gravitated to the technical aspects of the story. He analyzed the words, the sentence structure, even the way paragraphs were split up.

All these methods of approaching the text now seem very very long ago. For many years now, Dr. Burke has used a method that he maintains has been most beneficial to him.

> Now, when I look at a piece of work, the most important criterion to me is personal identification. I don't need to know who Jack London was to find his work meaningful. There must be something in the work that touches a nerve in me. For instance, in *To Build a Fire*, when the guy builds a fire under a tree laden with snow, I identified with that immediately. That signifies mistakes to me. Dumb mistakes. Whenever I make any dumb mistakes I make that bridge with Jack London or his character. If I cannot identify with anything in that work, or nothing remotely interests me in it, I don't waste my time with it. (2:96)

This principle also influenced Dr. Burke's choice of text for the class. He said there is a need to teach a work because of its historical popularity. As he put it, "One cannot do American literature without teaching Hawthorne" (2:94). But beyond that, he informed me that most of what he teaches stems from his personal preference. He explained that the reason the class reading list included Sandburg, and not Robinson, is simply because he does not appreciate Robinson's work. The same is true of T. S. Eliot:

> I don't teach T. S. Eliot's "Wasteland" because I can't stand it. And what I can't stand, I don't teach. I don't have a natural enthusiasm for "The Wasteland." A great deal of what I teach now, especially after the so-called canon was expanded, is from personal preference and choice. And I like that. And that is not a terrible thing to say, because we do virtually the same thing all the time. For example, when you teach Robert Frost, you teach what you want. Because he wrote so many poems, your selection of what to teach is bound to be influenced by what you prefer. (2:94)

The meaning that Dr. Burke gets out of, or ascribes to a text, is filtered through experience. But he is quick to point out that "this meaning isn't final, because my experience isn't static, no one's is" (2:92). He is irritated by people who claim that a particular work is "the seminal interpretation" of something. "That is stupid. There

is no ultimate meaning. The bulk of Emily Dickinson's work was discovered after her death. That's what it ought to be. We don't know, we can only summarize, and as we do so we discover. Meaning in literature is the journey. There is no arrival" (2:92).

What Is Good Literature?

There are certain kinds of literature Dr. Burke will simply not read. He pointed out that his religious background and moral values are factors that influence the subject matter of what he reads or does not read. Other works may be borderline and the artistic quality determines their fate. He recalled a woman in one of his classes recently wrote about the menstrual cycle.

> Not my favorite topic but she was brilliant with her imagery and I soon shared in the pain she described. In her case her artistry won me over. There are many writers like that. Joseph Conrad for example. You forget their content or plot and just watch them use the language. (2:83)

However, the single most important qualifier for good or bad literature, as far as Dr. Burke is concerned, is the quality of pleasure that work gives the reader. "If it brings me the 'aha' experience, or it gives me a pattern to follow, then that's good literature." But that "aha" experience changes daily. He explains:

> I thought *Huck Finn* was good ten years ago but now it bores me to death. I thought Charles Dickens was good 20 years ago, but I can't stand him now. His style is so pedantic, so contrived, so commercial. I don't like Charles Dickens any more. So good and bad in literature is, or should be, a function of one's maturity and development. (2:82)

Concerning those works he would not read because of his religious and moral persuasions, I asked Dr. Burke how he determines that a piece of work falls into the "don't-read" category if he has not read it. His response was that he relies greatly on the reviews of such works, but usually someone who has read it, talks about it, and he

doesn't have to read it to come to the same conclusions because there are so many other good works waiting to be read.

Pedagogical Approaches

Dr. Burke calls himself a "performer" in the class. In a class this size (80 students) where students have to sit in fixed seats in a chemistry amphitheater, the teacher learns in a hurry to resort to some mechanism to keep them in class until the bell rings. Dr. Burke's frustration at having to teach literature under such conditions was very apparent when he reviewed what went on in the class. "A lot of students are sitting there totally bored or feeling that what I'm doing is completely insane. There is no way to reconcile differences of opinion in a class this size. A class of that size negates interaction" (2:84).

Another frustrating aspect was his knowledge that most of the students were in the class just for the credit. "They will probably never take this class again so they care little about what anybody does or says. They will take American history next quarter and never transfer anything they learned in American literature there. They don't see the correlation" (2:85).

Dr. Burke referred to the conditions under which he taught as being far less than the ideal. "The English teacher's ideal is to have 6, 8 or 12 students around a table with one poem for two hours" (2:85). But Dr. Burke is also a practical person, so he realizes that given the existing departmental budget constraints, such an ideal can only be dreamed about.

Philosophy of Evaluation

Dr. Burke conceded that he had no way of knowing whether the students were achieving the objectives set for the class. Here is his explanation:

> I don't have a good sense of how the students are doing primarily because of the evaluation technique I'm using. I think the essay is the best evaluation method for a literature class. It enables you to know more. If they were writing essay answers, I could get a much better feel of their control of the information. But I can't design a meaningful essay exam for a class of 80 students. I couldn't use my grader to grade essay exams. I just don't do that. So we're reduced to doing the objective type test, fill-in the blanks, identification of characters etc., all testing nothing but recall skills. So, I really don't know how well they're interpreting or identifying with what's going on in class. (2:86-87)

Dr. Burke redefined his expectations to enable him to be at peace with himself. His current profile of the average student who registers for the course is that they have never liked English or literature. Therefore he gives them the least amount of reading material they can stand so they do not feel overwhelmed. "That's why I give very short reading assignments. They are not more than half an hour's reading at the most. And I expect them, if they did that basic reading to begin to see how pleasant the experience is" (2:86).

And as he pointed out to me, many of the students did not even bother to do that. "Most of them don't read the assignments. And I know that. They come to class and take notes, but to take notes in class without reading the work is totally useless" (2:87).

A Sense of Goal Accomplishment

Dr. Burke drew a line between what he considered to be his role in the students' attempt to understand literature, and how he determined whether he was

accomplishing that goal. In explaining his role in the former, he employed the imagery of the bandleader. He told me:

> My role is the bandleader, if you will. We're marching down the streets in the band and I'm the drum major. My role is to start the band and start the procession down the road. The folks behind me are each dancing to their beat. There are some beats they will dance to, others they won't. So is the classroom situation. They will like some selections well. Others not so well. Some stories will make them angry, some will make them cry, others will make them laugh. My job is just to lead the procession down the avenues of literary analysis and appreciation. What they will have to read to understand or appreciate I have no way of knowing. But I feel I've fulfilled my role if I can lead them happily and gleefully down the Mardi Gras street, where we have fun and enjoyment with the work. (2:99-100)

As to what it takes to have a sense of accomplishment, Dr. Burke referred to Robinson Jeffers' "To the Stone-Cutters," a poem on the class reading list. Dr. Burke noted that the stone-cutters try to make their statutes immortal, but Jeffers rightly derides the fruitlessness of such efforts because nothing is immortal. Even what a poet writes will one day be forgotten. He quoted the last two lines of Jeffers' poem to illustrate his point:

> Yet stones have stood for a thousand years, and pained thoughts found
> The honey of peace in old poems.

Dr. Burke's grandest hope is that his students, at some point in their existence, will get this "honey of peace" in an old poem, an old story, essay, or whatever writing it might be. "At some point in their lives, not necessarily now, they'll be able to understand who they are or what they feel and see that someone else has felt the same thing and has written so that they can identify with it" (2:100). If they ever do that, even once in their lifetime, after going through his class, Dr. Burke believes that would be a tremendous sense of accomplishment for him.

Critical Theory and Current Trends

Dr. Burke listed attending professional meetings as being probably the most effective means of keeping abreast with trends in the world of literature. He observed that at these meetings new and old theories are discussed and papers are presented on new and innovative ways of looking at old and new literary material. At these meetings, Dr. Burke told me, "you meet great professional minds who are available to conference participants who may want to discuss ideas relating to the field" (2:103).

Another way Dr. Burke maintains current awareness of professional trends is by picking the minds of other faculty members in the department. "There is a lot of professional interaction among the faculty in this department so we share ideas with one another" he explained (2:101). Dr. Burke also reads several professional journals, among them *College English*. He indicated that he does not subscribe to *College English*, but he has access to the journal and has read it "every now and then" for several years.

With regards to critical theories, Dr. Burke considers himself "very high on Reader-Response theory." He stated that of the many theories in professional circulation, "Reader-Response seems to make the most sense to lower level undergraduate students, and is consequently the most appreciated by them" (2:102). That is why he applies that methodology in teaching those classes, he said.

Asked how he specifically applies the methodology in his classroom, Dr. Burke stated that he tries to get the students to verbally express their personal views about a work and be able to substantiate those views from the text. "In such situations, I try to fade to the background and let them talk among themselves" (2:103).

In addition to allowing students to talk among themselves about their individual understandings of their reading, Dr. Burke also told me he often divided the class into small groups and got them to discuss the work. It is for this same reason that he tries to include an essay question in his exams, he further explained. "I want the students to reason things out from their own perspective. The essay becomes a conduit for the student to, as it were, reinvent the wheel, to make their own personal statement about what they read" (2:108).

By his own account, Dr. Burke does not consciously put as much stock in the other critical theories discussed in chapter 2 as he does in Reader-Response theory. For example, he readily conceded that he has not followed the Deconstructionism debate well enough and therefore does not consider himself well "equipped" to attempt to introduce some of its propositions in his teaching, especially in lower undergraduate classes.

On feminist criticism, Dr. Burke stated that even though he is very "sympathetic" to literary feminism, he would not consider himself a feminist. "I try to revise the canon sufficiently to address feminist concerns, but beyond that I have no crowding sentiments for or against it." He pointed out the lines between Reader-Response and Literary Feminism often converge. "Because there is a close similarity between Literary Feminism and Reader-Response theory, I try to keep abreast with what's going on in both camps" (2:104).

When I inquired about his opinions about New Criticism and Structuralism he was quick to point out that he "no longer" does anything with New Criticism "but utilizes Structuralist methods" in his graduate classes.

The Student: Alice Freeman

Background and Expectations

Alice still remembers when she became attracted to literature "as though it was yesterday." Alice's high school background is the British educational system. In this system, the student attends five years of high school, at the end of which the student sits for the General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level (GCE "O" Level) in certain pre-selected subjects. During the third year of high school the student selects the subjects he or she wants to offer at the "O" Level. The student spends the last two years of high school mastering the syllabi for the selected subjects.

It was during the third year of high school that Alice became interested in literature. She recalled an incident one afternoon. The Form 4 literature students were reciting some poems aloud in unison and "it was so beautiful I could not pull myself away from an earshot of their voices. That day I decided I would be like them" (2:31). Since then, Alice has been an avid reader. She enjoys bits and pieces of everything and is not too settled on any particular genre. She likes "good short stories and some poems" (2:36). But she adds very quickly that whatever it is, the work should portray "real life," and better still if the work has a moralistic base. "I don't like stories that don't make a moral statement," she stated (2:36).

Alice was a senior English major whose emphasis was literature, so American Literature II class was required. She told me that, compared to other literature classes she had already taken, she expected to do very well in this one. She explained, "I have taken a class from Dr. Burke before so I know how to study for his exams. At this stage

I am more interested in maintaining a high GPA than in deciphering the merits of the course" (2:33).

Reactions to the Text

Alice confessed that she did not always have the time to read the assigned text before class because she was taking an overload. She made it up for this by being more attentive in class. On occasions when she had the time to read, however, she told me she was very thorough. She described what she did:

> Generally, I read the biographical portions about the author first. Then I write notes of what I think is important to me while I read. When I go to class and the teacher emphasizes something different, I write in the margin in bold letters "TEACHER." That means that's what's important to the teacher. This is especially important for examination purposes. (2:39)

Alice made the point repeatedly that what was most important to her in the class was to get a good grade. She detailed how she scaled the relative importance of the course during my second interview with her.

> My main concern is to try to anticipate what he [Dr. Burke] might think to be important in a test. First, I think about the piece in terms of examination, and then later about how it applies to real life, mine and others. On a few occasions, I try to distance myself from the work and judge its truthfulness to life, that is, how it mirrors life. I've discovered that many of the works we read are more fictional than fact in that sense. (2:48)

When I inquired what Alice did about the assigned reading after it has been discussed in class, her response was quick and witty. "Nothing. I wait for the test and unload what I perceive to be what he wants" (2:49). She explained also that she felt very lucky because she had read many of the works on the class reading list either in other classes or by herself, so "I don't feel really guilty" not reading often before class (2:49).

Defining "Good" Literature

When I asked Alice to distinguish between "good" and "bad" literature, she sat for a long while and then excused herself. She came back after a while and explained to me that she needed to breathe in some fresh air outside as she considered the distinctions. After a little more pensive deliberation she said in a matter-of-fact way, "That's hard to say" (2:36). A moment later she added, "I think there are levels of literary awareness that must be taken into consideration" (2:36).

She cited the works of two writers, whose works have been considered controversial, for different reasons to illustrate her point.

> When Whitman sings America, he includes in his portraits a presentation of both the "good" and the "bad." So that as far as subject matter is concerned, good or bad may be difficult to appraise. Mark Twain introduces local color and regional or sectional dialect in his writing. So in *Huck Finn* both Jim and Huck Finn speak the language of their cultural surroundings. Is that good or bad? What one group may brand as permissive and irresponsible may be praised for genuineness and originality. At different times we reappraise our readings and we grade the works differently. So it's hard to say. (2:36)

Getting Meaning from the Text

"Any good piece of literature would have multiple appeal," Alice conjectured. She said she is always open to new insights from the same work and consequently feels that it is futile "to work hard at generating meaning." She said different occasions and experiences make the same piece of work take on different meaning. "I let the mood I'm in dictate what meaning the work should have," Alice stressed. She said it does not bother her that some teachers sometimes assign a specific meaning for the text "as long as they don't insist that that's the only meaning to be derived from the text. If they do, they alarm me" (2:41).

Alice explained that for purposes of examination, she tries to echo the teacher's point of view as far as meaning is concerned. "But that's as far as it goes. I may have my own private interpretation that could never be compromised, and I'm not going to wage a third world war over what someone else insists to be the only truth" (2:41).

On Pedagogy

If Alice had her way, she would "demand" that there should be more interaction in the class, not so much between the students and the teacher, but between the students. She feels the teacher should set the tone for that kind of interaction to take place, but she would not blame the teacher for his inability to create that atmosphere. "Literature flourishes in an atmosphere where each person feels that what he or she has to say about the work matters. You can't do that genuinely in such a big class" (2:53).

She thought, however, that the teacher's practice of routinely calling the names of individual students when he made a point was an excellent teaching strategy to maintain order in a class this size. "They hear their names, and for some of them that reminds them that they're still in class, otherwise they turn the class into a rowdy street market" (2:53). Alice noted that calling students' names this way did not embarrass anybody because he did it routinely and he did not pick on any particular person.

The teaching methodology used in this class that Alice appreciated most was not even considered outrightly to be a "method" as such. It was the teacher's uncanny ability to make every piece on the class list have some application to real life, and to "our setting here in a parochial school." She explained why that method was appropriate: "Most of the students are very young and I think the teacher realizes that

their lives have to be molded, so he uses the class to do that" (2:55). She recalled one day when they read a poem by a writer who took the position that life is meaningless. "We're born, we struggle through life, and we die." This poet illustrated the futility of life by depicting people who killed themselves in several different ways because of their inability to handle the pressures of life. After reading the poem, Alice said the teacher simply said there is another side to the situation that the poet completely missed. "He said that to the Christian, there is something to look forward to, that there is another reality that only God could give. And he proceeded to present another way of viewing existence that was far more positive. I like that very much" (2:55). It is Alice's view that by constantly putting things in perspective, the teacher prepares the students to face life in the so-called real world knowing that reality is not always based on only the observable things in life.

The Literarily Competent

Alice thinks the most important criteria for literary competence should be wide reading. Such a person, she argued, should know a lot, not only about the subjects that are most dealt with in literature, but they should also know about the personalities who have figured prominently in literary history. "They should know about people like Shakespeare and others in his league and be able to make intelligent conversation about both authors and what they have had to say" (2:56).

She also indicated that she would expect such a person to know about how the subject has evolved over the years, including the theories and counter-theories that have made the subject both lively and dynamic.

Summary

The focus of this chapter has been Dr. Burke's American Literature II class. I have attempted to describe the various facets of the class. These facets have included the setting in which the class was taught. The setting was composed of elements like when and where the class met, the composition of the class, and what a typical day in the class was like.

I also described the text used in the class according to authorship, ethnic origin of authors, and the period representation of the works the teacher selected.

The third part of this chapter was a description of the teacher in terms of his philosophies and understandings of literature in general, the importance of literature, his evaluation approaches, etc. Finally, I described one student's outlook on the class and how it fitted into her concept of literature.

CHAPTER VI

CASE THREE: DR. FOUNTAIN'S HONORS IN LITERATURE CLASS

During the Winter Quarter, 1991, I visited Dr. Fountain's ENGL 280 Honors in Literature I class as an observer. This chapter is a description of the events of the class as I perceived them. As in the preceding two chapters, this chapter is based on interviews with Dr. Fountain and one of her students, documents pertaining to the course, and my observations of class proceedings.

The topics I investigated in this chapter correspond to those investigated in the early chapters: namely, the setting of the class, the textual materials used, the teacher, and a student. Under each of these topics I explored various sub-topics that have bearing on the main questions of the study. All these have been done with one aim in mind: to attempt to capture and describe the milieu in which the Honors in Literature students in Dr. Fountain's Winter 1991 class attempted to acquire literature competence.

Description of Course and Assignments

ENGL 280 Honors in Literature is one of three two-credit Honors in Literature courses taught in the undergraduate school at Insight University. None of the three courses is a pre-requisite to either of the other two. An honors student who so desires can take one or all three courses in any sequence.

The *1990-1991 Undergraduate Colleges Bulletin* of Insight University describes the course this way:

> Selected masterpieces of literature in both poetry and prose are analyzed from such points of view as theme, structure, character development, and literary techniques. Opportunity is given for individual analysis through class discussion and critical papers. (p. 117)

In her course syllabus, Dr. Fountain outlined some "objectives" that corresponded in a general way to the bulletin description of the course. The objective, she wrote, is "To read a variety of works of literature in which a creative artist, poet, or musician is the major character and to discuss important issues and ideas that are raised as related to theme, structure, character development, etc."

Dr. Fountain based the student's final grade on the following requirements:

1. Full class attendance.
2. Participation in class discussions and activities.
3. Reading quizzes on each book.
4. Three "thought" papers of three to four pages each.

In addition to these four requirements was a "Note" that stated,

> While reading each work, you should keep an informal journal that will consist of two to three pages per assignment and will be turned in with the required papers. Your journal could include entries that can be used as a basis for discussing the study questions in class, challenging ideas or quotations that have arisen from your reading and can serve as further discussion points in class, possible relationships seen between this work and others you have read, and/or anything that helps you to understand this work better.

Class Setting

Classroom

During the period of my study, ENGL 280 Honors in Literature[1] met in a classroom in the humanities building. This building is one of the oldest on the campus and houses most of the classrooms for such humanities courses as English, history, sociology, and communications.

The Honors class met in a classroom on the main floor of the building nearest the north entrance. The classroom had a single entrance that opened to the corridor on the main floor. On the walls of the corridor near the classroom were several notice boards and a large glass window used for special displays or course advertisements. As a result, the area around the door to the classroom was always crowded with students who made so much noise that the classroom door was always closed.

The room had two old large glass windows that were opened or shut depending on the condition of the weather outside. During my visits, the windows were always shut because of the cold outside air, so the room sometimes felt stuffy.

The classroom seated 24 students in six by four rows, but I was told that as many as 32 students could fit "comfortably." The first statement Dr. Fountain made when she met her students for the first time was "I can't stand a class in a row" (3:1). There were 12 students already seated and she asked them to rearrange the seats "in a semi-circle." "I want to see my students, especially in a class like this eyeball, to eyeball," she told them (3:1).

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[1]Will henceforth be referred to as Honors class or course.

The students were told that from then on the first students to come to class should begin to rearrange the chairs in a semi-circle after that day's pattern. She told the students they had one week to decide where they wanted to sit permanently because after that time they would all be assigned their chosen seats for the rest of the quarter. Both directives regarding seating arrangements were followed by the students without any hint of displeasure.

Dr. Fountain still used the large desk and chair provided for the teacher. At first sight, both chair and desk seemed proportionately too big and awkward looking when contrasted to the long semi-circle of fifteen students in that small room, especially when she stood up during instruction. However, this perceived awkwardness was very temporary.

Meeting Times

The Honors class met 21 times in the course of the quarter. It is a two-credit hour course so instruction times were twice a week on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:30 to 10:20. Sometimes classes were scheduled on Thursdays when Dr. Fountain had to be away for official school duties on the normal class days.

Classroom Composition

Fifteen students registered for the class, 11 of whom were women. The average age of the students was 19 years, the youngest being 16 and the oldest 22. Ten of the students, roughly 67%, were non-Hispanic Caucasians, three were Asians, one Hispanic and one Black. The students represented all but the senior classes. There were five juniors, four sophomores, four freshmen, and two with permission to take classes.

Typical Class Periods

In this section I will describe the general pattern of the class periods from when the students assembled to when the bell announced the end of class. I have divided these into four sections: (1) 9:25 a.m.: five minutes before class begins, (2) 9:30 a.m.: devotion and announcements, (3) quiz (when there was one), and (4) lecture.

Five Minutes before Class Begins

I soon discovered after several observations that what took place five minutes before 9:30 was dictated largely by what was to happen after 9:35. At 9:25, on any given class day, one was likely to find at least 10 of the 15 students already seated. I found out that the reason for this was that most of the students in the class did not have a class preceding the Honors class, and also, because there was no scheduled class in the room the period before the Honors class met.

If there was a quiz that day (which was weekly), one would likely see most of the students in their seats with books open, obviously preparing for the quiz. Usually at this time, the class was uncannily quiet. During the initial weeks of the quarter, when this spectacle repeated itself often, I wondered whether the students waited until that moment to read the material, but I realized later that the nature of the quizzes made the students use every moment they had to look at the various angles of their reading.

On days when there were no quizzes, the atmosphere in the class before 9:30 was not as solemn. The students generally were not as pre-occupied with their books, and they visited with one another talking about non-class issues.

9:30 a.m. Devotion and Announcement

Dr. Fountain frequently began her class with a short devotional thought. The devotions usually celebrated and accentuated the good things of existence. She sometimes read pieces of inspiration and then followed it up with a short prayer. Other times she read from the Bible or asked the class to contemplate some aspect of nature after which she asked one of the students to pray. Her devotions rarely exceeded three minutes.

The devotional period was often followed by announcements pertaining to the class. The announcements ranged from the need to reschedule a class because she was going out of town on a school errand, to an invitation to visit an art exhibition in a nearby town. This was also the time she returned graded papers or distributed handouts. The handouts she distributed were often about suggested topics for the thought papers.

The Quiz

Usually once every three class days there was a reading quiz in Dr. Fountain's class. On quiz days she distributed quiz questions as soon as she finished the devotions. All quizzes were essay type so she always asked the students if they needed clarification of the question.

On the first quiz, Dr. Fountain took some time to explain that all quizzes would last 10 minutes. She did not expect everybody to write a full page but that past experience indicated that most students wrote about three quarters of a page during the 10 minutes allowed.

All quizzes were open book, so the students were free to refer to any textual material available. Even though the quizzes were supposed to end after 10 minutes,

during the seven quizzes I sat through, the average length of time was 15 minutes. Dr. Fountain usually asked the students to "start drawing a conclusion" to their answers after about 10 minutes. The first students to finish the quiz usually did so after 12 minutes, and the last people roughly after 15 minutes.

Dr. Fountain never "demanded" that the students stop work and pass their papers forward. She stood in front of the class and employed them to "close" their thoughts. She collected finished papers as the students handed them over until everybody gave her a paper. After the last paper had been handed over, she put them away and started the discussion on the reading for the day.

The Lecture[1]

Although Dr. Fountain's lectures differed in specific details (e.g., she taught different works and authors whose philosophies and orientations differed), several aspects of her lectures throughout the quarter were remarkably similar in the way she approached things. I describe below some of the practices that she followed routinely in her lecture during the quarter.

Her use of teaching aids

Dr. Fountain considered historical background as indispensable in the study of literature, so she provided the students with a variety of materials that depicted the background of the work being studied prior to the beginning of the study of a particular book or author.

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[1]See appendix A.

Among the items she used were postcards, pictures, engravings, artifacts, and videotapes of artistic portrayals of works. Usually she passed the items around the class. This was the case when she introduced Hawthorne's "The Artist of the Beautiful." She showed picture after picture of Hawthorne and his family in Concord and explained the context of those pictures.

> This place is a picture of Nathaniel Hawthorne at about the age when he wrote the "The Artist of the Beautiful." [She passed that around and showed them another picture.] And this is a picture of his wife, Sophia. The two of them have a love story which is very similar to the Brownings [She told the Browning and Hawthorne stories to the class and showed them another picture.] . . . This is a picture of the house in which Hawthorne was born. And this is the house in which the family lived in Concord, Massachusetts when he died. He wrote a number of his books in there after he returned from Europe. (3:88-89)

By the time she finished showing all the pictures and other historical documents relating to the work, she had not only created an atmosphere of historical immediacy between students and a particular author, but also given the students an insight of the period the work was written in. And as one student said concerning the pictures, "I feel like I know the Hawthorne era now, not so much from reading his books, but through the picture presentation today" (3:94).

Reading and explicating

Probably the most consistent of Dr. Fountain's teaching methods throughout the quarter was reading and explicating from the text. In all the works discussed in class, she always used portions in class and commented on those portions in their context. She never commented on the entire work without reading portions of it. She employed this method whether the work under consideration was a poem or a lengthy prose piece.

To illustrate this I quote excerpts from her treatment of Emily Dickinson's "I'm Nobody! Who Are You?"

She asked the students to "take a look at the poem for a moment" (3:66) and then read the first two lines:

> *I'm nobody! who are you?*
> *Are you--Nobody--Too?*[1]

She paused and interjected her comment, "Then there is a parallel," and continued with the next two lines

> *Then there's a pair of us?*
> *Don't tell! They'd advertise--you know!*

She commented, "Notice all the exclamation points. Is she really serious here or is she having fun?" She continued with the poem:

> *How dreary--to be--Somebody!*

She interjected, "Who can give me an example of a somebody?" One student answered, "Her father."

Dr. Fountain replied, "Her father. First what's a somebody? How do you decide if you're somebody?" Another student answered, "Somebody important that you look up to."

Dr. Fountain inquired, "What are some important things you look up for?"

Another student replied, "If the person is well thought of."

Again, Dr. Fountain: "What about the president of the United States? How would you like to be George Bush? Really, how would you like to be like the president of the university?"

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[1]Excerpts from poem in italics.

Yet another student commented, not about the questions being raised by Dr. Fountain but about the sincerity of the author of those lines:

"I don't think she's being sincere in this poem. She wants to be famous, and I think she's just writing the poem to try to convince herself that she doesn't want to."

Dr. Fountain would not veer off into another subject so she replied, "Ok. That may be so. But if you consider it seriously, what are some of the things about a somebody that she is referring to here?" She did not wait for an answer but repeated the line below:

How dreary--to be--somebody!

She followed this with:

> Did she say this ironically? Did she say this one way and mean something else? In fact, really, it is more dreary to have to be somebody, like the president of the United States or Sadam Hussein or some of these people who are always in the public eye. They're always having to be out there in the forefront. Is it really "dreary--to be--somebody?" Maybe it is. Maybe she's right. Or may be she's saying this with her tongue in her cheek. (3:61-62)

Another example of Dr. Fountain's method of reading from the text and explicating from the reading can be shown from excerpts of her presentation of "The Artist of the Beautiful." Her focus in this presentation was Hawthorne's use of symbolic language.

> We talked a little bit yesterday of some of the symbolic things he uses, and I think it will be well if we look at the first page and read down through it and see how Hawthorne sets the tone of the story. (3:96).

Before reading she asked the students: "What are the key words in the first paragraph?" Then she read the paragraph through.

An elderly man, with his pretty daughter on his arm, was passing along the street, and emerged from the gloom of the cloudy evening into the light that fell across the pavement from the window of a small shop.

She repeated her initial question and provided the answer herself: "What key words do we have? We have 'gloom', and we have 'light'. What other opposites do we have?"

A student answered: "Elderly man and his daughter."

Dr. Fountain agreed but she clarified the points of comparison:

> The elderly man and his pretty daughter. Now, just because he's elderly doesn't mean that he's ugly. But we have age differences here. As we read through this, let's notice how many opposites we have, because this is one of the things that Hawthorne is trying to set for us in the story. We have extremes, and one of the things that he constantly felt was the ideal was that which was more toward a balance.

Then she read on.

> *It was a projecting window; and on the inside were suspended a variety of watches, pinchbeck, silver, and one or two of gold, all with the faces turned from the streets, as if churlishly disinclined to inform the wayfarers what o'clock it was. Seated within the shop sidelong to the window, with his pale face but earnestly over some delicate piece of mechanism on which was thrown the concentrated lustre of a shade lamp, appeared a man.*

She stopped and asked the students, "Now, do we have other opposites coming up?"

Once again she answered her own question: "You have the young man and the elderly man. Now, let's keep going and see if we can build up some more opposites."

She read one more sentence from the passage: "What can Owen Warland be about? muttered old Peter Hovenden.

Dr. Fountain stopped and explained the significance of the line.

> Now, here we have people identified by name. "Warland." Is there any significance to these names? Is there significance in *The Scarlet Letter* to the names? We have a daughter named Pearl. We have a mother named Hester, which is a form of Esther. We have Dimesdale and Chillingsworth. Hawthorne

> all through his stories makes his names significant. Not every name is symbolic, but symbolic naming is one of the characteristics. You have in *Young Goodman Brown* three characteristics--young, goodman, Brown. You have his wife, Faith. He does not call his characters Sally and Betty and Bill or any such names. There's a reason why. Why do you think he chose Warland, Owen Warland?

A student answered, "Because the character essentially is at war with everyone else. No one seems to understand him, so in a figure, he is at war."

Dr. Fountain agreed. "Yes. It has to do with his relationship with the outside, and there is even a war land going on within him. All right" (3:97-98).

Use of rhetorical questions

Another characteristic pattern observed in Dr. Fountain's lectures was her use of rhetorical questions. Because she used the reading and explication method extensively, Dr. Fountain's lectures were dotted with a series of questions. Most of the questions could be answered from the reading or could be inferred from the information provided in the text. She often answered her own questions soon after asking them, thus leaving the students little opportunity to answer them. I often wondered whether she had designed the questions to be answered by the students but felt they did not know the answer and therefore went ahead to provide the answers herself, or that she intended to provide the answers in the first place but only passed the question for the benefit of the students. Or maybe she asked the questions and actually wanted them answered by the students but she did not provide enough time to create an atmosphere for answering them.

During all my visits to Dr. Fountain's class, on no occasion did she end class before the bell announced the end of the period. On the contrary, she always expressed her frustration with the bell. The following remark is representative of her attitude to

the "interruptions" of the bell. "Oh, the bell again. We never have enough time. Wouldn't it be wonderful just to go on with this without the constant interruption of the bell? But we have to be in the real world, too" (3:134).

The Text

All the textbooks used for the course are related to the subject of creative artistry. All the books or poems have some bearings on the work of the artist, or the characters deal with the subject of creative art. Dr. Fountain carefully chose the texts to reflect this emphasis because she intended the course to discuss the role of art and the artist in society.

There were three lengthy prose works, one play, two dramatic monologues and one short story. Other textual materials included in the course reading list were 16 poems by Emily Dickinson, 4 by Michael Angelo and 2 biographical novels.

Each student was also provided with a list of study questions on each of the pieces read. The study questions were intended to aid the students while they read the works and were not meant to be considered as definitive questions on the works. The students were also provided with biographical sketches of the authors. Table 6 shows a breakdown of the text used in the class.

Representativeness of Text

By sex of author

The works of 11 authors were studied during the quarter; of this number 9 were written by men. Apart from Emily Dickinson's poems, all the other works had a central figure who was a creative artist. Only two of the protagonist-type central figures

were women; Emily Dickinson in William Luce's *The Belle of Amherst* and Thea in Willa Cather's *The Song of the Lark*.

TABLE 6

HONORS READING LIST

Year Pub.	Title	Author	Sex of Author	Author's Country of Origin
1842	"My Last Duchess," "Andrea del Sarto."	Robert Browning	M	English
1912	"Life of Andrea del Sarto," "Life of Leonardo da Vinci"	Georgio Varsari	M	Italian
1976	"The Belle of Amherst,"	William Luce	M	American
	Several Poems	Emily Dickinson	F	American
	The Agony and the Ecstacy	Irvine Stone	M	American
	Several Poems	Leonardo da Vinci	M	Italian
1844	"Artist of the Beautiful"	Nathaniel Hawthorne	M	American
1937	*The Song of the Lark*	Willa Cather	F	American
1972	*My Name Is Asher Lev*	Chaim Potok	M	American

By nationality of author

All the stories, biographies, poems and the play studied in the course were authored by Western Europeans and Americans. One of the authors, Robert Browning, who contributed two dramatic monologues, was British. There were two Italians: two

works written by Georgio Varsari and one work written by Leonardo da Vinci. The other six pieces were written by Americans.

By period of publication

Five of the 11 works had publication dates some time in the 20th century. Six were published in the 19th century or earlier. However, only Chaim Potok's *My Name Is Asher Lev* has a central figure placed in the 20th century. All the other works discuss the works or ideas of artists who lived before or during the last century.

The Teacher: Dr. Fountain

Literary Background and Teaching Experience

Dr. Fountain is not new to the English Department at Insight University. She has been associated with the university for 36 years, mostly as an English teacher. Currently a full professor of English, she spent the first 20 or more years of her association with Insight teaching literature courses. In the past 10 years she has taught part time in the English Department while carrying on her full duties of administration as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Dr. Fountain's area of specialization is American Transcendental literature. She has taught both graduate and undergraduate courses in a wide area of the field. Dr. Fountain has also been associated with the honors program at Insight University from its early beginnings. Since 1964 she has taught an honors course in literature each year, and has also been the director of the honors program at Insight for over 20 years.

Dr. Fountain's parents were both educators. Her father was a professor in mathematics, but it was her mother's academic interests that influenced her the most.

She was an English major in college. She also recalled that some of her parents' best friends were English teachers who had a profound influence on her. She still remembers two of her academy English teachers and two teachers in college that she really enjoyed.

She has always enjoyed books and, in a sense, she feels she is being paid for doing what she enjoys most, sharing her love of books with her students.

Philosophy of Literature

Dr. Fountain sees literature as one of the major art forms that help us as human beings to know ourselves. "And in knowing ourselves it brings us invariably to a relationship to God, to our response to Christianity" (3:17). She explained that "The work itself may not have anything to say about God or Christianity, but one's response to it may have implications to the Christian life." She stated that one of the important things she looks for in literature is what that work says to her as a Christian. "I ponder over what that work says to me as a human being, and how it helps me evaluate problems and analyze characters" (3:18).

In a deeper sense, she sees literature as helping humans to relate to all of human experience. That, to her, is what makes literature "truly exciting." "It opens up for us how people have looked at issues and the major themes all through history" (3:18).

The Literarily Competent

Dr. Fountain's concept of a literarily competent person has two dimensions. She believes that competence in literary matters can be demonstrated by knowledge or awareness of the broad field. So, she contends, "Such a person should be well read.

A person who reads with some kind of background so that he can see the relationship of ideas between one work and another work" (3:23).

The second dimension, according to Dr. Fountain, should reflect the person's knowledge of literary vocabulary because without the right vocabulary one cannot ask the right questions. She explained what she means by this:

> They have to have the right vocabulary so that they can understand how to look at literature. To be a good literary person you have to know how to ask the right kind of questions. And I think that as you mature in studying literature, you learn how to ask those questions, to yourself. We are not talking about asking somebody else, although that's part of it. When you read a piece of literature, what are you looking for? Your answer to the question of what you're looking for, brings you into the ability to make the kind of analyses that are important to make about literature. (3:23)

Benefits of Literature

The way Dr. Fountain sees it, one of the most important benefits that accrue to the literature student that cannot be easily obtained by studying other subjects is that "it offers the student the opportunity to see a whole attitude toward the human being" (3:31). She noted that this holistic attitude that literature provides is done in the context of artistry. In her words, "we see the beauty of words, the aesthetic quality, the delicacy with which words are put together to create the desired effect, at the same time that we're making a statement" (3:33).

Dr. Fountain contended that because literary people have the entire world for their canvass, they are not restricted to any one subject. She developed this idea further:

> The literary person can write about science, abortion, religion, or ethics. You're going to find that you're reading about all of these and more. You're covering the whole gamut of human experiences, and how people are relating to the experiences in a way that only literature can accomplish. Some of the coverage of those experiences you'll agree with, and some of them you won't. You encounter

> characters in literature that undergo intense human struggles and ask important and deep questions that cause us to pause and reflect for ourselves. (3:33)

Dr. Fountain maintained that through literature the human being is exposed to other human experiences that that individual could never have experienced in any other way (3:33).

But if there is any one word to adequately describe the social benefits of literature, Dr. Fountain would make a case for the word "discovery." This is what she called "a discovery of the world around us, a discovery of ourselves." She reiterated that it is only through literature that we identify what are the real issues of life, what the different ways of solving problems are, of analyzing characters, of seeing a kind of daily relationship played out and then analyzed. In this sense, Dr. Fountain identified with Robert Frost's assertion that literature helps us to remember things we didn't think we knew.

Encountering and Deriving Meaning from the Text

Dr. Fountain indicated to me that the way she approached the text before teaching is largely determined by the nature of the class:

> If I were teaching a class that was not an honors class or a graduate seminar I approach the text in a more structured way. For example, I have certain things I want to discuss and certain points I want to make, and the kids will take notes. (3:48)

It is a different situation if the class is either an honors class or a graduate seminar. In those instances she stated that she is less structured. She explained what she normally does on those occasions:

> I would have read the text before, so I usually go through and see what are some of the main things I had marked previously. For example, I reread "Artist of the

> Beautiful" before class today, and I made a bunch of new marks on it. I don't want to go to a class just to talk about the same old things I had talked about before. In fact the discussion we had in class today on "Artist of the Beautiful" is quite different from the way it's gone on before. (3:48)

She added that she normally made a list of three or four ideas that she would like to cover during that particular class period, but she was well aware from past experiences that her chances of covering all three or four ideas were about 50% or less "because usually one thing led to another so in those kinds of classes nothing is structured tightly" (3:49). She explained that it is not easy to take notes in her honors class because of its loose structure, but she feels that she is still able to get the students to provide their own structure during their individual reading of the text. That is the whole idea behind requesting them to write a journal. "I asked them to write a journal because I want to see what they're getting out of their reading. Some of the kids are very intelligent and I get some very good insights from reading their journals" (3:49).

On another occasion I asked Dr. Fountain whether she approached the text as though there was meaning in it to be discovered. I told her that the question was a follow-up of a previous class discussion in her Honors class about the nature of art. The question then was whether a piece of art has to be or it simply is? In other words, does art have to mean something, or does art mean something just by creation. One of the students in the class had argued that art means something by its physical state.

Dr. Fountain picked on what the student had said and argued that she was not so sure she could go that far because she could think of some literature that she believes are "simply impressionistic little pieces." She pointed out that sometimes the artist just tries to create the impression of the moment, "which is more a feeling than a sensory thing." She cited Carl Sandburg's "The Fog Comes on Little Cat's Feet" and said: "I'm

not sure he was trying to say anything great but he is giving us a very important sensory moment in time. Now, if you call that meaning, then you can't have art for art's sake" (3:54).

Yet she believes that "by far the majority of art does have meaning, or that we as human beings look for meaning in the art whether the artist really meant it or nor" (3:54). But she thinks it is a legitimate venture that the reader should look for meaning from the text. She paraphrased Hawthorne's statement in the *Marble Faun* that "unless readers see more in a work of art than the writer put into it it is worthless" to substantiate her convictions.

What Is Good Literature?

On the subject of "good" and "bad" literature, Dr. Fountain was quick to point out that there are no absolute standards because "what is good for one person may not be good for another." But because she teaches from a Christian perspective, she always looks out for two elements in the piece of work: "What is the point of view, and where is it coming from?" She explained:

> I think if a piece of literature has values that are opposite of what my values are, and all the critics acclaim it to be a great work of literature, I may read it, or I may not, but I probably may not teach it to a young class. You see, I may be able to read it and suspend my disbelief and know that I don't have to agree with everything I read. But I'm not completely sure about young people. I think you have to be careful with kids because a lot of times with young people, they think that because you selected that particular book you sanction and espouse the set of values embodied in it. If you teach that kind of book you have to be clear on what is sanctioned and what is not. (3:55)

Apart from values being an indicator of the worth of a book, Dr. Fountain thinks that such elements as the "quality of artistic ability" of the writer, the theme, and the subject can also inform on the merits of the book. She thinks, for example, that

certain subjects are universal and timeless, and others local and transient, so if the subject is only for right now it may not have any lasting quality (3:56).

She chooses her text with her views of quality literature in mind, but it is complicated because different courses demand different approaches. She explained how she selected texts depending on the type of course she was going to teach. If she were teaching a period course, this is how she selected the textbook:

> I choose my textbooks because they have pieces in the book that I feel are valuable in the overall direction that I want to go with the course. Another important consideration here is the quality of background materials provided in the textbook. I absolutely insist on that because I believe the student should have some background in order to place the time of this literature and see how the author was reflecting what the main issues of their own time. (3:51)

But the approach is different for an honors or seminar type class. In those classes she does not look for one textbook. She uses several, but only after determining what theme she wanted. For example, in the honors class I studied, the theme was the artist; but she had taught different honors classes under different themes, like the one she taught the previous year on the quality of heroism. She chooses the works that not only reflect the theme but can be read within the amount of time allotted for the course. "There is only a certain quantity that a person can read in a certain period of time, so I try to choose the best representatives to express the issues that we want to discuss," she pointed out (3:53).

Pedagogical Approaches

Dr. Fountain has taught as many as 85 students in one class. She pointed out that in classes that size all one can do is lecture, which she defined as the teacher sitting or standing in front of the class doing all the talking and the students taking notes--"a

little bit of discussion, a little bit of answering, but that's all you can do in that situation" (3:26).

But this is not a situation she prefers, and in the last decade or so she has stayed away from such big classes. "My ideal is somewhere around 12 or 15 students maximum in a circle sharing ideas together. We're all reading the same thing and all talking about the same book. But you've got input and different points of view" (3:26).

The Honors class with its 15 students in a semi-circle fulfills Dr. Fountain's ideal. They all read the same books, and the opportunity was certainly provided all students to share their ideas and points of view with the class. What is debatable is whether they took advantage of the atmosphere to share their individual views.

Philosophy of Evaluation

Dr. Fountain does not necessarily disapprove of the use of objective type tests that require factual information about the work as a means of evaluation in literature courses, but it is not a method she prefers. Below she spells out her evaluation techniques for the Honors class and the rationale for using this method.

> I usually evaluate on the basis of the students' ability to communicate to me what they're getting out of the work rather than the specific facts that they have gotten out of it. That's why in the Honors class I evaluate almost strictly on what they write. I depend on their subjective evaluation of what they read which comes through by the way they answer the questions and write their papers. What I want to see is evidence that they can develop a point or critically analyze some idea or something that inspires them. I am much more concerned that they be able to make that kind of communication than show that they know the facts. It's not enough to know who the characters are that happen to be in a book; you also must know what they stand for. (3:66)

It should be observed, too, that Dr. Fountain communicates back to the student about her impression of what she calls "their subjective impressions of what they

read" through her extensive comments on their papers. A sample student paper with her comments is supplied in Appendix C.

A Sense of Goal Accomplishment

Before glorying in her achievements for the class, or wallowing in defeat for not accomplishing her set goals, Dr. Fountain first determines whether she was getting through to her students, and she has several ways of telling that.

> You can usually tell by the look on the kids' faces. It could be blank, or it could be full of ideas. You can also tell by the answers they give back to you in class or through the quizzes or thought papers. (3:42)

She excused the relative lack of sustained exchanges of views among the students in the class:

> This class is a relatively sharp class. They're not a great discussing class as some of the others I've had in the past, but I think as far as being able to write down what they've gotten out of a work, they're one of the best. (3:43)

She observed that two or three people are needed to take off on the teacher's discussions in a class like this, but there are no such leaders in this Honors class. "You have to pull it out of them," she said (3:43).

But she is elated and feels fulfilled when her students demonstrate that they have picked up enough principles on how to read a book. When that happens, she knows they will never look at a book in the same light as they did before they started the class. When they develop for themselves the ability to ask questions that help them understand a book, or when they read more than just the story, like reading for meaning and relationship of ideas, I feel very accomplished, very good inside (3:42).

Ultimately, Dr. Fountain believes that the literature teacher has a big role

> in introducing the students to works that they have not read before or would probably not read otherwise. I think you're introducing them to ideas that they might not have encountered, at least up to that point in their experience. In so doing you open up a new world of discovery to them. It's not just for them to learn a bunch of facts, but it's to have that excitement of discovering things for themselves. I see my role as a literature teacher to alert these kids to the fact that in good writing they can make discoveries about themselves and about other people and about the world in which they live, that they could not have found in any other way. I sleep very well when I know that all this is happening to the kids I'm teaching, and I'm involved in it. (3:47)

Critical Theory and Current Trends

Dr. Fountain, whose administrative duties appeared to take most of her time, was clearly unhappy that she did not have enough time to keep up with trends in her academic field. Still she took steps necessary to ensure she was not completely cut-off. She read some professional journals and attended some conferences. For instance, she was in Concord, Massachusetts for a conference on Thoreau last summer. She also finds time to talk with some professional colleagues about "what's going on in the field," but she made it clear her "updateness, compared to a teacher in the field full time, will be more lacking" (3:49). Dr. Fountain belongs to MLA and several professional societies, including the Thoreau Society, the National Hawthorne Society, the Emerson Society, and the Willa Cather Society. All of these groups send her their publications.

Dr. Fountain reads *College English*, "but not as often as I did at the beginning of my career. I kept very up to date with CE until I became a dean" (3:48).

With respect to literary theories and pedagogy, Dr. Fountain contended that she did not teach with any specific theory in mind. She indicated that while her teaching style may reflect one or several theories, she would not say this was done consciously,

"that's just the way I teach. The way I teach comes automatically to me and I have not made any conscious effort to analyze what I do" (3:51).

She indicated that this observation is true of all five theories I discussed in chapter 2 with a little exception about Feminist Criticism. Dr. Fountain said of her approach to Feminist Criticism that while she does not consciously take note or point out specific feminist points of view and tell students about them, she is sure she probably does this unconsciously. She continued:

> In the selection of textual material, I certainly try to keep that in mind to ensure representation. One reason I included both Emily Dickinson and Willa Cather in the reading list is that they represent an important woman's perspective in writing in the 19th and 20th centuries. (3:53)

The Student: Tom Peters

Background and Expectations

Tom Peters was a sophomore art major who remembers having always enjoyed reading. He said he has always read what he likes, which means there is very little pattern to the kinds of books he reads. He remembers reading a lot of stories about dogs when he was a dog lover. When his interests shifted from dogs to horses, so did his reading habits. And he recalled that as he went up the grades "the pattern didn't change that much. I read selectively but always only about things that interested me" (3:68). In recent years, however, he believes he is attracted to poetry, and reads novels and biographies only when he is bored.

He was taking the Honors class because some friends talked to him about it. This is the only class he had heard of that discussed the world of the creative artist. The artists being studied were comprised of painters, writers, sculptors and the like, and he

felt that it was an excellent opportunity for him to learn about how other artists outside his chosen field of painting and sculpture thought and created (3:66).

Reactions to the Text

Tom called himself "an active reader." By that Tom meant he responded to his reading in very "physical ways." He credited the journal entry requirement of the course for making him that active. "Formerly, when I read a book all sorts of ideas run through my mind but I soon forgot them. Now I have the journal and I put down how I feel about my reading as I go along" (3:67). In this way Tom used his journal as a punching bag for ideas that later ended up as thought papers.

In class, however, Tom kept most of his reactions to himself. "Often I disagree with lots of things that are said in class, but I tell myself that that is someone's point of view and they are entitled to that. I don't want to come out as pouring sand on somebody's well-thought ideas. I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings so I keep things to myself" (3:67).

Once class was over, Tom said he "promptly" forgot those things he disagreed with in class. Only those ideas that "made sense" were added to his store of ideas in his journal. And he added "this [the addition to "this store of ideas"] happened very infrequently" (3:68).

Defining "Good" Literature

For Tom, the "goodness" of a piece of literature was determined solely by the way the writer dealt with ideas. He admitted that he was fascinated by the way

"good" writers treat old ideas. He compared literature to art and painting and suggested that there was nothing new left to be unearthed.

> People have painted for so long that I doubt if there is any real original subject matter to be covered. The core subject is the same whether you look at renaissance art or Picasson art. You see a direct line of development of the type of subjects they treated. The interesting thing about the different eras is that even though they were all probably doing the same thing essentially, there were specific ways in which each artist tilted the expression of the core subject to reflect their own perception of it. The same can be said of good literature. The great themes are virtually the same--love, hate, death, etc.,--and have been treated before. But the really good books take the same treated ideas and look at them in new and exciting ways. If a book does that, I call it a good book. (3:69)

It was also for this same reason that Tom believes that in literature there can be no right or wrong interpretation.

> How could there be? If a person reads a really good book it is because that book hit a personal nerve. And if there is that personal participation involved then no two people can see the same book exactly the same way because we all have different backgrounds. (3:69)

He thinks that different readers can have very similar conclusions but the reasons for those conclusions usually would be different.

Getting Meaning from the Text

When I asked Tom who determines meaning in a text, he answered emphatically that he did. The way he saw it, the author can only suggest things for the reader or direct the reader toward certain things, but the only one that is called upon to put everything together and let it be meaningful is the reader. It is in this respect that he thinks the meaning of the text is more important. He explained what he meant by that assertion: "When I say that, I'm saying my participation in the reading is more important than the writer's writing. And because I bring my background into my

reading, I can't accept someone else's meaning as my own if that meaning conflicts with mine" (3:72).

On Pedagogy

Tom liked the idea of arranging the chairs into a semi-circle because it had the potential to bring the entire class together on the same "wavelength." He said he dislikes classes where the teacher has "access" only to a small segment of the class. In this class, everybody is important because "everybody is sitting in the front row." However, he felt Dr. Fountain did not utilize the advantages that can come out of this physical arrangement. Tom said the only thing the entire class did was to react to Dr. Fountain's directions, but she failed to create the environment for the students to interact to one another's ideas about what they have read. He elaborated:

> In a class like this where you're discovering interpretation and finding out who does the meaning and learning about the author and everything, I think it is much more productive to have everybody's ideas expressed and not just the teacher's all the time. But she asks questions in a way that does not bring about that intention. For example, if she asks the class "I think this is a myth, don't you? Everybody seems to agree so nobody says anything. Certainly there should be a way to ask questions to generate better response. (3:76)

Tom stated that if questions were phrased in a way that inquired about how individual students would react to the situation that the characters in the books they read faced, he believed the students would look deeper into themselves and say things that were different and worthwhile.

Another thing Tom thought could be done differently is to change some of the books that were used for the class. He argued that all the books chosen "tended to give the impression that artists are so great and wonderful." He read the list of books from *The Belle of Amhest* to *My Name Is Asher Lev* and concluded that they all glorified

artists. "And it seems to me that that's not a realistic approach to a study of artists." Tom feels that a James Joyce novel on artists which has both "good" and "bad" stuff in it could be preferable.

> I'll rather read something like that, or even letters of Van Gogh to his brother. That will bring out more of who an artist really is than read a fictional novel like *My Name Is Asher Lev* where the artist is seen as a demigod. He is not human. He is a spirit. No, I'll chose different books, ones that are controversial, and I believe I'll get the students to discuss them more. (3:83-84)

The Literarily Competent

Tom measures competence in the affairs of literature mostly on the basis of the reader's ability to understand their reading. He said as long as the readers understand what they are reading and do not allow themselves to be unduly "overwhelmed" by the author, they are on the right track to literary competence. He told me,

> You might not know all the genres, and all the cadences of poetry, but as long as you can read objectively and understand and even immerse yourself in the poem or the novel or whatever one is reading and think clearly through the issues being dealt with in the book, one can be called competent. (3:87)

Tom said he is fervently opposed to using one's breadth of reading, especially in the "classics," as a measure of competence mainly because he feels "it is arbitrary." He argued that the question of developing a representative canon can never be resolved, and in the absence of a canon that is roundly agreed upon, it will be, in his words, "arrogant beyond measure to determine one's competence on the basis of any such selection" (3:87). What should be done is to teach the student to be able to read any literature and get the most out of it.

Summary

In this chapter, as in the previous two, I described one of the three literature classes I had selected for this study. The class described here was Dr. Fountain's Honors class in literature, ENGL 280. Again as in the previous chapters, my description focused on four areas: the class context, the textual materials used, the teacher, and a student of the class.

Concerning the class context, I described such physical aspects as the classroom location and chair arrangement as well as the teaching style. I also described the composition of the texts used including how they were broken down in certain categories.

The last two aspects of the chapter concentrated on the teacher and a student of the class. I described Dr. Fountain, her literary background, her conception of her role as a literature teacher, and what makes her feel accomplished. I described Tom Peters' attitude toward the text, his concept of good literature, and how he derived meaning from the text.

CHAPTER VII

CROSS CASE ANALYSIS

This chapter analyzes across the three cases on the basis of the two main questions the study asked.

Analyzing Across the Cases

In order to analyze across the three cases discussed in the three previous chapters, I find it beneficial to recall the two questions the study attempted to address. The questions were: (1) How do students acquire a sense of literature? and (2) How do teachers affect or influence the process through which students acquire that "sense" of literary competence? The organizational pattern followed in this cross analysis is the same as the one used in the description of the individual cases: the cross examination looks at the same four broad categories of class setting, course text, course teacher, and a selected student. Under each of these broad categories are several sub-items that are compared and contrasted across the cases. But first, I will give a comparison of the course description/requirements of the three classes.

Course Descriptions and Assignments

In all three classes, students were provided with course outlines that described the nature of the course, and with varying details explained what was required of each

student. In David's Literary Analysis course outline, students were informed that the course was "discussion based" and that "questions and contributions" were essential components of the course requirement. The class de-emphasized the notion of sit-in examinations by requiring two main out-of-class essays that utilized analytical and interpretive skills learned in the class.

In this last aspect, David's Literary Analysis course was similar to Dr. Fountain's Honors class. Students were to write three main out-of-class thought papers that related to "important issues and ideas" raised in their reading of the text. There were reading quizzes on each book read in class but these were open book and the questions were general and non-fact specific.

In contrast to the emphases of the above two classes on (1) "discussion," (2) "questions and contributions," and (3) writing thought papers and essays, Dr. Burke's American Literature class, for reasons that will be explained later, deviated from its original intent to deal with "concepts" and "comparisons and contrasts" of authors and their topics. Instead, the emphasis was placed on factual information, such as who wrote what, and when, and who said what. The course requirement stated that examinations would comprise 60% essay-type and 40% objective type questions. However, from the first examination (which included an optional take-home essay question) to the last, all questions were 100% objective in nature.

Class Setting

The location and structure of the three classrooms made for an interesting comparison in that they had subtle bearings on class dynamics. Both the Literary Analysis class and the Honors class met in rooms that provided the students with

opportunity to spread around and break into smaller groups for discussion when the situation called for one. In the Literary Analysis class, the 40 students met in a room that could seat more than 60 students, and they had the opportunity to double the space size by using the adjoining class. The 15 students in the Honors class likewise had ample room to maneuver in their room that could seat 32 students.

The American Literature class, on the contrary, met in a class that effectively limited the mode of instruction to be used. The fixed seats not only discouraged small group interactions, it also fostered an atmosphere where the teacher lectured all the time. The students in the American Literature class, unlike their two other counterparts, were constantly aware that they met in a class designed for chemistry instruction, and were never pleased about it.

Class Composition

Class size was very influential in how the class was taught. For example, because the Honors class was comprised of only 15 students, the teacher not only "decreed" that they sit in a single semi-circle in class with her in the middle of the other half circle, but she also gave one-page quizzes each week. In addition, three thought papers of four or five pages each were turned in by each student in the course of the quarter.

In David's Literary Analysis class, the 40 students were required to turn in two essay analyses, with a maximum of six pages each. They were also required to turn in five one-page journal article reports. Dr. Burke had 80 students so he adapted his course requirements (moving away from essay exams to objective type exams) to enable him to cope with the logistics of grading the papers. Also, in the American Literature

class, there were no small group activities like discussions because the size of the class did not make that feasible in an amphitheater with fixed seats.

Typical Class Periods

The pedagogical styles of the three teachers were each unique. Dr. Burke stood and taught the American Literature class from the front of the class. He was almost always the only voice in the class. The students in this class rarely reacted to one another. Dr. Fountain's style was similar to Dr. Burke's style in that she was frequently the only voice in the class, but she sat in front of the class and had a close proximity with her students that Dr. Burke did not.

David was a cross between Drs. Burke and Fountain. He sometimes stood or sat in front of the class and lectured, but more often he divided the students into smaller groups and encouraged them to discuss the works they had read on their own. Consequently, David's class had the most frequent student- to- student interchange of the three classes.

The three teachers also differed from one another in the way they taught content. Dr. Fountain and Dr. Burke spent a considerable amount of time dealing with the historical circumstance of the work being studied. But while Dr. Fountain provided the student with numerous teaching aids relating to the history of the work, Dr. Burke relied on his memory for stories he had read about the circumstances of either the work itself or the author. In any event, both teachers related things that were not in the text. David, on the other hand, spent very little time on the history and background of the work. He concentrated most often on the explication of the text, asking leading questions about the intended meaning of the work being discussed.

All three teachers asked their students a lot of questions about their reading, but they differed in the time they allowed for student response. David seemed to be the most patient in waiting for an answer or probing for the student's clarification of their response. Dr. Fountain asked the most questions but did not allow enough wait-time between her questions and the student's response. The result was that she almost always provided an answer to her own questions before the students had thought about the question. In time, the students learned to hesitate long enough for her to provide the answers.

Dr. Burke also asked his students questions in class, but his questions tended to be more general and not directly connected with the reading. His questions often were about social issues that seemed to have some remote bearing on the reading. When he got his students animated about something, it was often because he had asked their opinion about a contemporary controversial issue.

The Text

The most striking similarity among the texts chosen by the three teachers was their bias for Western authors, predominantly British and American. With the understandable exception of Dr. Burke's American Literature course, both the Honors and Literary Analysis courses seemed to have universal literary appeal, yet only 1 out of 43 works studied in the Honors and American Literature classes was by a non-Western writer. There was not a single work by a writer from Africa, Asia, or Australia.

Another common characteristic of the three classes was that there seemed to be a disproportionate preference by the teachers for male authors over female authors. Even Dr. Burke, who had vowed "to change the canon" in this regard, included only 12

women writers of the 79 total writers whose materials he used. Dr. Fountain's Honors class included 2 women writers of the 11 selections used. David provided the most balance in his choice of authors. He included 8 female short story writers in his total of 12 and 2 female poets for the 16 he included.

The three classes also differed somewhat in the teacher's choice of text according to publication date. On the whole all three teachers included in their reading list, works written by "modern authors." A notable exception was Dr. Fountain, whose choices were spread fairly evenly between the 19th and 20th centuries.

The same cannot be said of David Slocuum. Twenty-two of the 30 works he selected for the class were works written in the 20th century with 11 in the last 40 years. Dr. Burke's choices broke down similarly. Over one-half of his 79 pieces were selected from the period between the two World Wars. Only 29 were pieces from the Civil War up to the beginning of the World War I.

The Teachers

Literary Background and Teaching Experience

All three teachers credited their very educated parents for their rudimentary interests in books. Dr. Burke credited the education he got at home for his early interest in reading. Dr. Fountain's parents were both educators: her father was a mathematics professor, and her mother an English major while in college. Dr. Slocuum's parents had enough "We Were There" series to wet his appetite in story books.

But while Dr. Fountain knew fairly early in her schooling that she wanted to be an English major and subsequently teach English at the academy level, neither Dr.

Slocuum nor Dr. Burke had any such notion. In fact, they both went to college intending to be gospel preachers. Dr. Slocuum and Dr. Burke both had intentions to be theology majors until their "conversion" to English studies during their sophomore and junior years, respectively.

In graduate school, all three teachers studied literature. Dr. Fountain and Dr. Burke shared a primary interest in American literature while Dr. Slocuum identifies more with British literature. All three teachers have narrow literary interests. Dr. Slocuum is an avid Dickens student, Dr. Burke has a keen interest in American ethnic literature, and Dr. Fountain is an authority on American Transcendental literature.

An area in their background where the three teachers differ most remarkably is their teaching experience. At the time of this study, Dr. Slocuum was in his second year of teaching. This is contrasted with Dr. Fountain's 34 years of teaching and Dr. Burke's 14 years. All three teachers have taught only at Insight University. Dr. Fountain started teaching at Insight before Dr. Slocuum was born and has taught most of the teachers on the Insight University English Department faculty, including Dr. Slocuum.

One noticeable difference about the three teachers relative to their years of teaching is that those who have taught the longest seemed to be the most flexible when conflicts arose with class schedule. For example, Dr. Fountain's administrative duties often took her away from school over long periods. When this happened, she either got somebody to cover for her or she simply rescheduled for another non-class meeting day. She very rarely had complaints from the students. It is possible that the students did not complain because she had a relatively small class or that the students were intimidated

by her administrative position in the school and therefore accommodated her the best they could. Whatever the situation, Dr. Slocuum did not enjoy that leverage. Once he tried to schedule an evening class to show a video, and it appeared as if the students were vying with one another to thwart his effort. When a similar situation occurred in Dr. Burke's class, he simply decreed the solution when the students could not agree on a suggestion for a class change.

Their Philosophy of Literature

The Literarily Competent

The three teachers all agreed that a large part of literary competence is measured by one's knowledge and understanding of background material. Background is what Dr. Fountain termed as awareness of the "broad fields." She was emphatic that a literarily competent person should be read enough in the field to be able to make connections and association with ideas of one work and another.

Dr. Slocuum added that another reason background knowledge is important in literature is that this is the only way the literary mystique of allusion can be understood.

Dr. Burke was careful to make a distinction between just knowing the story and bringing one's experiences to bear in the reading of the story. He contended that the field is so broad that a strict requirement of familiarity with most literary work is not only impractical, it is also elitist. Consequently, he argued that the literarily competent person finds ways of reinventing old themes and adapting them for contemporary use--an idea Dr. Slocuum shared as he noted that the literarily competent person should constantly think of ways to react with the material, as if in "dialogue with the author."

Dr. Fountain also stressed that in addition to one's knowledge of literary background, the literarily competent person must also possess a certain literary vocabulary stating that it is shared vocabulary that enables literary people to not only communicate with one another, but also empowers them to ask the right questions.

Benefits of Literature

None of the three professors questioned the value of literature. Instead, they emphasized different aspects of what they considered beneficial about literature.

Dr. Burke stressed several beneficial things about the subject, including the ability of a piece of work to cause the reader to be amazed. Amazement is usually the cause of the author's ability to create characters and settings that the reader identifies with. He also identified as unparalleled the pleasure that literature provides the reader.

To Dr. Fountain, the most beneficial thing about literature is the subject's singular ability to provide a holistic picture of life and experience. She claimed that literature is the only subject that affords the most fulfilling examples of the human endeavor and that no other subject affords the individual the opportunity for self discovery as does literature.

Dr. Slocuum discussed the problems associated with the notion that literature serves a humanizing role, noting that though Nazi death-camp generals were known to have read the best pieces of literature while engaged in their heinous operations, that fact did not, of necessity, detract from the fact that many people are touched by the noble ideas espoused in great literature and even change their life course consequently.

What Is Good Literature?

On the question of good literature, the views of Dr. Burke and Dr. Fountain were strikingly similar. Both professors stated that they bring their Christian background and orientation into making such quality decisions. Neither of them would teach works that propound or espouse points of view that are anti-Christian or contrary to their Christian orientations. But while Dr. Burke would not even read such questionable works, Dr. Fountain would not go that far. She would not teach it because she believes young students tend to equate a teacher's selection of reading material with sanctioning everything about that work.

Another area the two agreed on was that good literature also demonstrates exceptional artistry on the part of its writer. In addition, Dr. Burke rates the work's ability to give him what he called the "aha," or pleasure experience, as a top indicator of a work's worth.

Dr. Fountain, on the other hand, counts the quality of the theme of the work as an important ingredient in determining whether the work is good. She believes certain themes transcend time and place while others exploit a momentary feeling for a particular place.

Unlike Dr. Burke and Dr. Fountain, Dr. Slocuum stated that the most important criterion for a determination of good literature for him is the rereadability of the work. He emphasized that the notion of re-readability is paramount because it makes distinctions between what is pedestrian and what is lasting, noting that few people reread literature that falls in the former category.

Pedagogical Approaches

Of the three teachers, the one that appeared to be the most frustrated with the pedagogical stance he used was Dr. Burke. Dr. Burke called himself a "performer" in class because he recognized that he needed the element of the theatrical to keep his students marginally focused on what he was doing in class. He did almost all the talking because he thought the physical seating arrangement in the chemistry amphitheater, coupled with the immense class size, limited his options greatly. He hated the circumstances under which he taught and knew that he was achieving very little of what he could achieve given a smaller class size and a more pliable classroom. His ideal preference, like Dr. Fountain, was for a smaller class of between 12 and 15 students and a longer time period per class session. Although he was very dissatisfied with the class set up, one would never detect that unhappiness from his class sessions because he was, by far, the most enthusiastic and animated of the three teachers.

Dr. Fountain was probably in the most ideal position to practice her teaching preferences. With 15 students--which she considered to be the ideal--she could have her semicircular arrangement and dialogue with the students about their reading. Dr. Fountain stressed that the main advantage of having a small group of students in a semicircle, for her, was the potential for every student to realize that their views counted in much the same way as the student beside them. She contended that the students in this arrangement were more likely to participate in a relaxed and equal basis than any other arrangement. It was very unclear, however, based on the limited and largely unsustained participation she got from the students, that in this particular class setting this arrangement made any difference.

Dr. Slocuum said he preferred to place students in little groups to talk among themselves because he did not feel that the lecture route was positively sustainable over an entire quarter. He indicated that no matter what the class size, if he had enough space he would still split the students into groups after sharing some thoughts about the work with them. This notwithstanding, Dr. Slocuum's preference, like that of his two other counterparts, was for smaller classes.

Philosophies of Evaluation

All three teachers stated that the best evaluation technique for literature classes was the essay and they tried to implement this in their individual classes with the exception of Dr. Burke. Dr. Burke regretted that he had to fall back on techniques like filling-in-the-blanks, and character identification, which he said tested only recall knowledge because he could not grade 80 essay questions and return them back to the students in a reasonable time. If he had a smaller class, he argued, he could do that even in a survey class.

Both Dr. Slocuum and Dr. Fountain said they relied on the essays students turned in to evaluate their students.

A Sense of Goal Accomplishment

The three teachers had similar concepts of what made them feel accomplished even though they differed somewhat in the details. Dr. Burke was most satisfied if either immediately or later in their experience, his students could identify deeply with something they had read in the course. Because he saw his role only as a "band leader"

whose job was to introduce the tunes, he was satisfied when his students demonstrated that they could step to the tunes.

Dr. Slocuum, on the other hand, was most happy when his students showed mostly through their essays that they understood the process of working with the text to determine meaning for themseles, not on the basis of what some critics claim, but as they work out the meaning for themselves using sound literary principles.

For Dr. Fountain, her greatest sense of accomplishment comes when her students ask the "right" questions. The answers they provide are not as important for her as the depth of the questions they ask.

Critical Theory and Current Trends

With respect to what they did to maintain professional currency, all three teachers, with varying degrees of involvement, stated that they attended professional meetings. At these meetings none of them indicated that they presented papers, but David detailed some in-depth discussions he had with a conference participant who had presented a paper and had been involved with the organization of the conference on matters of theory. All three teachers had attended at least one conference in their area of specialty within the last year.

The three teachers also mentioned that they keep abreast with what goes on in the profession by reading professional journals, most of which were in their specialty area. Also, they all indicated that they have read *College English* on occasion but none of them personally subscribed to the journal or read it with any degree of frequency. Dr. Fountain did until she became an administrator, but David expressed a preference for *Profession*, the MLA equivalent of *College English*.

David parted ways with Drs. Burke and Fountain in their individual perceptions of how much they learned from one another as professional colleagues. While the latter two noted that their interactions with colleagues in the department was a notable source of information about current trends in the profession, David did not have much opportunity for such interactions. David, however, noted that when he team-taught with another colleague in the department last year it was a very rewarding learning experience for him.

Differences in the three teachers' awareness and or utilization of critical theory in their teaching was most apparent during interviews with them. Dr. Burke was very emphatic about what his preferences were in this respect. He was aware of and utilized Reader Response ideas most in his classes, and while he did not want to be identified with every tenet of Feminine Criticism, he was aware of Feminine critical ideas that were identical with Reader Response theory and therefore conceded practicing some aspects of Femininist Criticism. He maintained he had very little use for Structuralism and Deconstruction in the undergraduate classroom. He also told me he no longer utilized New Critical ideas in his teaching.

Dr. Fountain refrained from categorizing her teaching style insisting that while her teaching may demonstrate the understandings of one theory or another, it may be purely coincidental because she does not consciously teach on the basis of informed theory. She pointed out however that she makes it a point to ensure that from the standpoint of textual selection gender representation is maintained.

David's awareness and conscious utilization of critical theory contrasts sharply with his two other colleagues. David was more current and demonstrated a

remarkable awareness of many critical theories, pointing out in fine specifics where he felt comfortable and where not in his utilization of the five theories discussed in chapter 2. He indicated that with the exception of Deconstructionism, he utilized the other theories with varying degrees of intensity.

What the three teachers articulated to be their theoretical and or pedagogical approaches in their respective classrooms aside, there were interesting similarities between what actually operated in their classrooms and what they perceived took place there.

For example, there was evidence in Dr. Burke's class that there were more theoretical influences operating on his classroom approaches than Reader-Response. In his lectures he emphasized theme and attention to close readings. His test questions, far from dealing with the "concepts," required only one correct answer; blanks were filled in and characters or authors or quotations were identified (see Appendix B). This pedagogical method seems to leave little room for conceptualization and certainly no room at all for individual points of view. There were times when Dr. Burke seemed to emphasize or outrightly depart from New Critical thought as when he insisted that biography and history are important (also evidenced by the volume of biographical and historical questions he includes on his tests).

Dr. Burke's concern about the canon and his tendency to raise social and political issues, as well as his emphasis on moral issues at times makes him sound like a social/political critic, a critical stance that is very identifiable with Feminist Criticism.

Even though Dr. Burke felt he identified with and utilized Reader-Response orientation the most in his class, there was very little evidence of this in his classroom

practice. Although he indicated to me during an interview that he does not prefer that he dominate class "discussions", he did virtually all the talking in the class. None of the traditional Reader-Response teaching markers such as dividing students into small groups for discussion, or requiring journal entries, or even essay writing, were utilized in the class.

In contrast, Dr. Fountain, admittedly with a far more motivated group of students, created an atmosphere in her classroom that was more conducive to a Reader-Response teaching environment. She tried to bridge the gap between her and her students by physically re-arranging the seats in the classroom in order that every student could see and hear whoever spoke in class. Her questions lacked wait-time but she made the effort to engage her students in dialogue about their reading. And probably the most significant Reader-Response trademark of all, she required her students' to write journal entries about their reactions to what they read. She read each student's journal with religious zeal and liberally wrote comments along the margins of the entries.

In addition to demonstrating Reader-Response tendencies in her teaching, Dr. Fountain also showed some structuralist inclinations. In her explications, especially of poems but also some prose pieces, she frequently pointed out to her students that the author's choice of words made meaning discernable. When she said of Hawthorne that "all through his stories [he] makes his names significant," and that he never called people "Sally and Betty and Bill" (see Appendix A) she was reflecting, howbeit unintentionally, the structuralist contention that the part was as important as the whole.[1]

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[1]This statement could also be seen as an analytical concern with language, and therefore, could be considered New Critical.

Dr. Fountain, like Dr. Burke, also paid attention to close reading. Her essay questions were predominantly theme-oriented. These tendencies suggest New Critical persuasions, but she is not an avowed devotee because of her extensive use of background, biography and historical context to explain the literary work. Again like Dr. Burke and later, David, she stressed that literature has meaning (defined in moralistic terms) and therefore does not subscribe to the ultimate lack of meaning which seems to be the bedrock of radical deconstructionism.

David also demonstrated the influence of several literary approaches on his teaching. Behind his desire to break-up the students into small groups may be the concept of Reader-Response. The reasoning behind breaking the students up was they were motivated to contribute during discussions of the work among their peers.

David was also very New Critical in his teaching and in the kind of essays he required from the students. He very rarely brought in consideration of history or background in his discussion of the work. Instead he read large segments of the text and explicated it solely on its own merits. The kinds of essays he required his students to write also required close reading and analyses, both hallmarks of New Critical contentions.

It was not clear in my perception of his class proceeding whether and to what extent David consciously demonstrated Femininist Critical ideas, but the fact that he used the writings of Flannery O'Connor to teach the short story might be a indication of his sensitivity to gender representation, which is a concern in Feminist Criticism.

The Students

The three students interviewed were chosen because they were good informants. Their views are not presented here as representative of their separate classes; achieving such representativeness was never a consideration here.

Backgrounds and Expectations

All three students claimed that they had an early interest in reading, but their reading interests were divergent. Julian preferred the short story best of all, especially if they were adventure stories. Alice claimed that she read anything that "portrayed real life" and made a moral statement. Tom had a slight preference for poetry but also reads animal stories.

Of the three students, Alice was the only one majoring in literature. She said she had no choice in taking the American Literature class because it was required for her major. Tom was taking the Honors class on the strength of recommendations from his friends who had taken the class before. His interest in the course was heightened by the fact that it gave him the opportunity to learn about other artists, since he was an art major. Julian was attracted to her class because it was purported to deal with analysis. She wants to be a lawyer so she figured that a course in analysis would have a later application in her law career.

Concerning the three students' expectations about their separate courses, they had mixed reactions. Alice was sure she would do well in the class because she had taken a class from Dr. Burke in the past and understood his system. Julian's expectations about the Literary Analysis class were apparently unmet because the course

was taught differently from her law analytical mindset. Tom expected to learn about the inner workings of different artists in areas that were both positive and negative.

Reactions to the Text

Alice conceded that because she was carrying an overload, she rarely had the time to read the assigned text before class and therefore did not have the opportunity to seriously react to the text unmitigated by the ideas of others. She consequently used the class discussion of the text as time to assess the text, but even here, her assessment was heavily weighted by what she perceived to be important for examination purposes.

Tom was the exact opposite of Alice, due in part to the course requirement that students make journal entries of their reactions to the reading. Tom used his journal to describe his personal feelings about the work, but he very rarely discussed these reactions in class during a discussion of the work.

Julian was more similar to Tom than to Alice. She always made sure that she read the assigned reading before class, but instead of writing down her feelings about the reading she often got a friend or someone else who had read the text to discuss the work's merits.

Defining Good Literature

Tom defined good literature primarily in terms of how old ideas were treated in new exciting ways. Tom does not rate the value of a book according to its artistic merits. The ideas and themes treated by the author provide for Tom a work's claim to fame. Julian on the other hand, though uncomfortable with the concept of good and bad in the rating of literature, still thought that both content and artistry should form the basis

for valuing a piece of work. Alice suggested that because literary appraisal is a never-ending endeavor, it is neither wise nor prudent to claim that one work is good and another bad because given another time and place, different people would value the same work differently.

Getting Meaning from a Text

Of the three students interviewed, Julian was probably the most animated when we discussed the issue of meaning generation in the text. She was concerned that most students sacrifice their own personal understanding of the work they read for that of the teacher's because they feel that they have to agree with the teacher's interpretation in order to receive a good grade. She stated that she did not think her teachers encourage the students enough to seek personal meaning from their reading, consequently many works have assigned meaning that border on the cliche.

Tom did not mince words. He stated that the only person who could know the meaning of a piece of work is the reader by insisting that the reader's participation in "the reading is more important than the writer's writing." In this Tom shares the same idea with Alice that the meaning of a work is influenced heavily by the cultural and specific background that the reader brings to the work. All three students claim that they would defer their personal understanding of the work to the teacher's under examination conditions if they thought that was needed to get the top grade.

On Pedagogy

The three students also had mixed reactions to the pedagogical stance their teachers adopted. While Tom applauded the semi-circular arrangement of the seats

(because "it put each student in the front row"), he felt that Dr. Fountain did not capitalize on the physical closeness that arrangement created among the students to involve them in a meaningful way in class discussion. Tom opined that the teacher should endeavor to get the students to discuss the thoughts about their reading instead of having to react to preset ideas by the teacher.

Julian thought it was "refreshing" that the teacher allowed the students to talk about their impressions of the pieces they read among themselves in the small groups he created. She felt, however, there should however be checks and balances to determine who was actually participating and who was not. Alice would have preferred more student-to-student interactions but she realized that was not a practical option given the immense size of the class. She felt that the teacher's approach of calling students by name to answer questions was an ingenious way of maintaining discipline.

The Literarily Competent

Alice's portrait of the literarily competent person was one who has not only read widely in the field of literature, but also has a fair knowledge of the personalities that have been prominent in literary history. Julian also rated a person's familiarity with the broad field of literature as a prominent ingredient in the literarily competent person's arsenal of virtues.

Tom disagreed with the notion that breadth of knowledge of the field should be a measure of competence saying that leads to canonization of literature, something he terms "foolhardy and exclusive." He said competence in literature is by and large a subjective matter and that as long as the reader can read and understand and identify with the issues raised in the work, such a person qualifies as a literarily competent.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS AND CONCERNS

Sense of Literature

This final chapter of this study, reviews the questions that inform the study, and draws some conclusions on the basis of the observations of the three classes. These observations and concerns are outlined below under specific categories.

This discussion is followed by several concerns which ensued from this study, with some ideas about how the interrelationship of the undergraduate literature teachers, the students, and the texts they encounter in the classroom might be improved.

Class Environment

It appears the setting of a literature classroom influences the frame of mind that students at Insight University (especially, but not exclusively) brought to the learning environment.

The Literary Analysis class, though away from the building traditionally associated with English classes, compensated for the displacement by having extra space for group activities. The Honors class met in the English building under almost ideal circumstances (size-wise). Students in this class seemed to be the most satisfied with their closer setting.The American Literature class met in a "foreign" classroom under

conditions the students considered unsuitable for literary studies. The students appeared to be the most unhappy about where they studied literature.

Class Size

Class size influenced class dynamics and evaluation requirements.

The Honors class had 15 students so the teacher could afford to arrange seats in ways that maximized teacher-student, student-student proximity. The teacher could also afford to evaluate the students' quizzes. The small class size made it easier for students to be grouped in a way that fostered equal access to one another and the teacher. The same cannot be said of the Literary Analysis class which had 40 students. Even though the students were evaluated mainly on the basis of the essays they turned in, only two (each approximately four pages) were required for the course. The American Literature class with its 80 students resorted to objective-type evaluations. Initially the teacher had planned for 60 percent of the evaluation to be essay-type, but he changed the requirement on account of the class size. There was no attempt to group the students in any way.

Pedagogical Method

The pedagogical method adopted by the teacher influences the way the students perceive literature.

In the American Literature class, the teacher used the traditional lecture method--teacher in front of class explaining the work to students who are preoccupied with taking notes. Students here are more likely to accept the teacher's explanation as the one true meaning of the text since they do not have any incentive to disagree or offer

another opinion. In the Literary Analysis class, the teacher placed the students in an atmosphere that made the serious ones think about the meaning of their reading for themselves. They could discuss their ideas about the text with fellow mates who did not present for them the authority figure that the teacher often is. Students studying literature in this environment are more likely to form their own views about the work and attempt to defend them. The Honors class presented the students with the best opportunity to discuss the text with all class members since each saw the other virtually face to face. The students in this class probably had the best opportunity to take ideas presented in the class and examine them in ways that neither of the other two classes could. Students in this class had the most unintimidating environment to express their views.

The Text

The volume of text required for the course influenced student dedication to preparation for class.

The American Literature class seemed to have the most students who did not read their assigned reading before class (inferred merely on the basis of the number of blank faces the teacher drew when he asked specific individuals basic questions about the assigned reading). In this class, 40 authors were studied, and even though the works themselves were not long, the number, roughly four authors a week, seemed to overwhelm the students. In the Literary Analysis class, 30 authors were studied. This broke down to 3 authors a week. Even though students in this class also had problems keeping up with the schedule, their situation did not appear nearly as pronounced as their counterparts in ENGL 276. In the Honors class where 11 authors were studied, I never

heard any student complain about being overloaded with reading. While it is true that the weekly quizzes (which covered the work being studied for the week) might have served as a powerful incentive to read, it is also true that the students did not feel the pressure of moving on to a new work every class period.

Still on the text, it appears that students were exposed predominantly to works written by men from Western Europe and North America. But it appears that this apparent bias in textual selection toward men and Western literature has less to do with insensitivity to women authors and non-Western writers than the teachers' preoccupation (conscious or otherwise) with the literary canon.

The American Literature class was dedicated to literature written by Americans, so there is no argument here about representation by nationality. But when one looks at representation according to sex of authors, one finds that students were more likely to read works written by men (31 out of 40) than women. In the Literary Analysis class where there was no geographical or national specificity implied or stated, only 1 of the 30 authors studied came from somewhere other than Britain or America even though the textbook included works by authors from places other than Britain and America. Of the 30 authors, 20 were men and 10 women. In the Honors class, all 11 authors were Western Europeans or Americans. Nine of these authors were men.

How Teacher Affects the Process

How do teachers affect or influence the process through which students acquire a sense of literature? The following observations grew out of a review of the data i gathered in this study concerning the role of the teachers in making students become literature literate.

Class environment

The ability of the teachers to foster student-student and teacher-student discussions in class is largely dependent on class size. The larger the class, the less effective the teacher is in fostering this relationship.

In the Honors class, the teacher created the most conducive environment for all the students to communicate their thoughts about their readings both with the teacher and among themselves. In the Literary Analysis class, the opportunity was created for some of the students to communicate with some of their peers, but the class was too large to have all the students communicate among themselves at the same time. The American Literature teacher was reduced to the role of a "performer" in his attempt to hold the attention of the 80 students. There was virtually no inter-student discussion of the works they read.

Motivational differences among students

It appears as if background and prior preparation do affect the level of interest and participation that students demonstrate in the literature classroom.

In Dr. Burke's American Literature class, many of the students were non-English majors. Also, the course was lower-division, so the relative lack of attendance and interest demonstrated by the students could have been partly a reflection of this fact. The Literary Analysis course was generally made up of almost all majors or minors in English, so they had a vested interest in the class. One can only conjecture about the response to David's small group approach if the class were taught to generalists or non-English majors and minors.

Although most of the students in the Honors class were non-English majors, they were a highly motivated group who had very high GPAs. It is conceivable that individuals in this group are more likely to be more responsive to the teacher whatever their class size than another class made up of all types of students.

Relationship of grade to attentiveness in class

Students were more attentive to the course requirements when the teacher implemented measures that directly affected their grade.

Of the three classes, students in the Honors class had the most impressive class attendance record, in part because the teacher took record every class day. The students also generally demonstrated that they read the assigned material before they went to class. This could be attributed largely to the weekly quizzes held in this class. The quizzes were all essay in nature so the students were "forced" to read enough of the material to be able to write intelligently about the questions posed. In the Literary Analysis class, attendance was always taken and students who absented themselves more than twice during the quarter could lose up to 5% of the total grade for the course. Consequently, few students absented themselves enough to incur this penalty. The same could not be said of the students' attitude toward reading the required text. On several occasions, many of the students did not even know which text was being discussed that day. There were no quizzes at all in this class. In the American Literature class no attendance was taken. Except on days when exams were held, the class was consistently 15% to 20% below capacity. Although the students had little opportunity to demonstrate their awareness of the material they read, only a few of those who were asked routine

questions demonstrated that they had read the material. The teacher often "threatened" to conduct pop quizzes because of the lack of response to his questions, but he never did, and in time those "threats" lost their effect.

Encouragement versus resignation

The teachers appeared to encourage their students to express their personal views of the works they read. But the power of their (teachers') arguments coupled with the lucidity of their presentations and the sheer depth of knowledge of the material often confounded and overwhelmed the students. So students tended to sit back and listen.

In the American Literature class, the teacher did not only impress his students with his vast knowledge of the material, he often insisted on the "correctness" of his interpretation of the work. Often he was so animated in defense of his point of view that the students missed the point that he was baiting them to defend their position. Dr. Fountain was probably the most solicitous of student opinions concerning the works they read, but she had so much "inside" knowledge of the authors' lives, times, and works that the students preferred to listen to her countless anecdotes than express their own ideas about what they read. Partly because Dr. Slocuum did not do most of the talking in his class as a result of the opportunities which he provided for students to talk to one another, students in the Literary Analysis class tended to express their own ideas more than in the other two classes.

The text

The selection of texts for the classes appeared to play to the strengths of the teachers' areas of literary concentration. None of the teachers selected text from non-Western authors.

Dr. Burke was most animated when he talked about the authors whose works were classified as ethnic literature. Dr. Fountain was very comfortable with every selection she chose, but she appeared more so when she taught 19th-century authors. Dr. Slocuum did not show any noticeable preference for any particular authors on his reading list.

Concerns

Several areas of concern have emerged about the teaching of literature from my research.

First, if the three teachers in the study are typical, there is a need for literature teachers to broaden their knowledge and understanding of literary theories on an ongoing basis. They should do this not only when they teach theory or in order to teach theory. An important justification for literature teachers to be informed about theory is so that they can increase and enrich their approaches in the teaching of literature. If the teachers in this study had all been well-grounded in theory, some of the disturbing contradictions I observed between what the teachers theorized about and what really happened in the classroom might have been avoided. It is a little distressing to observe that a teacher thinks he or she is teaching a certain way when actual practice describes something else.

The teacher who demonstrated the keenest awareness of literary theory, and attempted to put that awareness into practice (at least in the area of Reader-Response)

was Dr. Slocuum. However, his students did not seem to respond any better to the class process than the students in either of the other two classes. Given this observation, one might even be tempted to conclude that a teacher's awareness of theory may not impact appreciably how students respond to the class process. After all, one might argue, student participation in Dr. Slocuum's class was as limited to a "core" segment of the students as it was in Dr. Fountain's (who indicated she did not teach on the basis of informed theory) class, and when he got the students into their small groups to discuss the reading materials among themselves, several of them did not follow his instructions because they had not read the materials before attending the class as they were required. The actions of the offending students consequently negated the effective implementation of the theories Dr. Slocuum had intended to apply.

Another conclusion may be more appropriate, however. It still seems likely to me that a teacher who is informed about theory would do a better job of motivating students to practice a given theory and subsequently get them better involved in the class process. The problem is not necessarily that a teacher's awareness of theory does not make a difference in how students respond in the literature classroom; it may be instead, that the relevant issue in student participation, given a teacher who is aware of theory and attempts to practice it, is the **number of students** the teacher has to work with. It is probable that Dr. Slocuum would have done a better job of getting students in a smaller class, like Dr. Fountain's, to participate in the class process than would Dr. Burke, or did Dr. Fountain.

The main difference among the three teachers in this regard was that while Dr. Slocuum's understanding of literary theory matched his application, Dr. Burke's

application of theory was incongruent with what he theorized. Given this situation, Dr. Burke could have his ideal class of 15 students and still "perform" for the students because he mistakenly identifies that practice with Reader-Response. Similarly, Dr. Fountain's lack of grounding in theory might make it almost impossible for her to provide a consistent direction, as far as application of theory is concerned, in her classroom. But if a teacher is well-grounded in theory, he or she should stand a better chance of motivating a reasonable number (12-15 was identified by all three teachers as being the range for the ideal number of students in a literature class) of students to participate meaningfully in the literature classroom. Dr. Slocuum's students sometimes took advantage of his inability to be in all 10-13 groups for an appreciable time, to "cheat' during the small group discussions. This tendency would have been reduced significantly if Dr. Slocuum had had only 3 or 4 small groups to contend with. If the students know that the teacher could sit in on the small groups during discussions for a sustained period, chances are that they would read their text and get on with what the teacher had designed.

A second concern is that literature teachers might endeavor to find non-graded ways of evaluating students because the use of grades as motivation for the study of literature seems at best inadequate. It is unfortunate to hear students get to the stage where rightly or wrongly they feel that it is in their best interest (grade wise) to have two opinions--private and public--concerning a work, even though their public utterances are false. The situation that brings this condition about should be eliminated.

The appreciation of literature is generally one of the few cultural and or aesthetic requirements for all college students, and it may well be that doing away with

the grading system (that works so well in courses that use objective type multiple question evaluation system) may be what is needed to free the students to speak their minds freely. English departments could experiment by offering non-requirement literature courses for no grade. Students who sign up for such classes will do so because they want to appreciate literature. If the teacher is "good" the course will sell itself and soon other students will want to participate in that experience.

Alternatively, teachers could offer their classes on a "Complete/Incomplete" or "Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory" basis. This option decreases the emphasis on grades as primary motivation on the part of the students to study literature.

Third,if teachers still feel that they need the graded method of evaluation, however, then steps must be taken to eliminate the prevalence of students who fake having read their text. Teachers might first do an inventory of the volume of text they require the students to read and determine if they absolutely have to and can read all the items in the time allotted. If teachers find that students are saddled with too much reading, they might cut down on the number of pages because better that the work is not on the list than that it goes unread. From the list that teachers determine students should read, the teachers might institute credible checks and balances to ensure that the students actually do read the texts. Teachers might also consider, among other classroom teaching techniques, frequently asking students to teach or team-teach the class on the basis of what they were reading at the time. If the required reading is not unreasonable, the students might "get the message" and accept the challenge, and the result would be more student participation in class.

Fourth, the literature teachers in this study believed that they encouraged their students to generate their own ideas about their reading. Students likewise insisted that they wanted to form their own opinions about the meaning and content of the works they read. What is unclear is whether what the students come up with are actually their own ideas or the ideas that have been suggested--unwittingly most probably--by someone else.

Much of what the students see as their own ideas seem more likely reflections of their responses to either the study questions or the theme questions that the textbook or teacher supplies to go along with their reading. My observation is that far from the students discovering things for themselves (and those in these three classes did believe they discover what they said for themselves) they may in reality be articulating the points of view the teacher or textbook editor expresses in those study questions. If the objective is to get students to genuinely discover things for themselves, then they should not be primed with such questions.

Finally, some interesting ironies also emerged from the study. The most glaring was the fact that students and teachers tended to have very different views of what went on in the classroom. A case in point, Dr. Fountain believed that she provided her Honors students with a relaxed atmosphere so they could participate in the discussions in the class. When the students failed to participate as readily as she expected, she assumed that "this particular group of students are not the discussion type." But the students saw things differently. They too wanted to participate in a "meaningful" discussion, claimed Tom. He attributed the lack of student input to the nature of the questions asked in the class, as well as "the teacher's impatience to wait for answers.

Either the questions demanded one word answers, or when they required a substantive response we never had the chance to talk back."

The unfortunate irony here is that Dr. Fountain did not want to do all the talking in class. She would have preferred that the students talked all day among themselves. She prepared the physical class environment precisely to elicit student response and interaction. She resorted to doing most of the talking because she concluded that her students did not enjoy talking in class. What she did not know was that the students were not talking because they did not consider her questions engaging and also thought that she enjoyed talking.

Dr. Burke, similarly, thought that the failure of his students to respond to his teaching was largely because the class was too large to connect with each individual. He was convinced that he provided his students with every opportunity to participate in what took place in class. What Dr. Burke failed to realize, however, was that most of the students just felt disconnected with what they read. What Dr. Burke should have done was to consider why it was that the loudest arguments that occasionally erupted in the class almost invariably were responses to some social statements he had made that students identified with.

It is entirely possible that he could have sustained the attention of the students, all 80 of them, if they could identify with what they read. It is interesting that one of the most important criteria Dr. Burke used in the selection of reading materials for his class was whether *he* could identify with the material. It could well be that what a fourteen-year veteran literature teacher identifies with may be different with what his 18-and 19-year-old first-and second-year college students identify with.

Another ironical situation where teachers said one thing but did something else was in their consideration of what constituted addressing concerns of feminist criticism. All three teachers indicated that they were conscious of and took steps to address issues of interest to literary feminist critics. However it seemed as though considerations of feminist literature was understood by the teachers only in terms of achieving textual representation. Dr. Burke was all for changing the canon in favor of women, but that meant including a few more women authors whose works had nothing to do with the main issues that feminist critics write about. Drs. Fountain and Slocuum likewise made representativeness of women authors on their reading list synonymous with addressing feminist concerns in literature. Better, I think, that the teacher does not address feminist concerns at all, than to boil it down to how many women authors are represented on a class reading list irrespective of the subject matter of their (women authors) work. Just because there is an increase in the number of works written by women on a teacher's reading list does not guarantee that those works address the issues feminist critics raise.

A fitting conclusion for this study is a quote from Francis R. Hart (1989), Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, who for nearly 40 years taught literature to students and learned a thing or two about the process:

> We have, remember, a mixed clientele; some value literature already, some do not. They need to be persuaded that literature is enjoyable, interesting, valuable, and the simplest rhetoric tells us we must show them that we find it so--indeed, that we can find more pleasure and value, and can help them do so. The primary goal . . . is to strengthen and intensify the pleasure of reading, the motivation to read on. If we fail in this, nothing else matters. The goal is most likely to be won through a new sense of possibilities, a new confidence in response. Many beginners do not know that they have responses--valid ones, at least. The goal is blocked by premature technicality, by rigid insistence on validity, by excessive labeling, by presenting texts as examples of critical concepts.

> But once we have brought students to (or near) this stage of confident enthusiasm, we must be ready to challenge it, to help them discover how much they do now know, discover that validity of response depends in part on other things, contexts. We must move them toward a new and more active reverence for the text as the work of an other--another person, another time, another culture. (p. 74)

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Extend study to include literature classrooms in public schools.

This study described the process of literary acculturation in a small (population 3,000 students) Christian university. A similar study could be done in a public university of comparable student size or larger to discover whether the patterns that showed up in this study are present given a non-Christian non-private setting.

2. Expand study to graduate literature classrooms

This study demonstrated how undergraduate students in one parochial university acquired literary competence. It would be fascinating to find out how graduate literature students--who are being trained to be "literature professionals"-- from Insight University or other public universities gain literary mastery.

3. Extend study to other undergraduate literature classes

It would be worthwhile to conduct a similar study in other undergraduate literature classes(other than the specific classes studied) both in Insight University and elsewhere to find out if the experiences described in this study are typical irrespective of the kind of literature class taken in the undergraduate program.

Appendix A

SAMPLE LECTURES

Literature Analysis
October 3, 1990

10:35 I want to ask you first of all about your impressions on reading Checkov's *The Lady with the Pet Dog*. What do you think.

* **Things kind of fell in place after I'd read his "On Mortality in Fiction."**

SM Did it bother you that it was eh . . .

* **No, it didn't bother me. You see when I first read LPD my initial reaction was, Ok, well? So?" Then when I read "On Morality in Fiction" it enabled me to analyze the story more adequately. It gave me a grounding to understand what he was doing. I understood that he expected me to add to the story. There is something he expects me to contribute to the story. It is not his job, as it were, to introduce subjective elements that may be lacking.**

SM Give me an example of one thing that he asks you to do. I think that's an interesting concept.

* **Not that I feel he should have, but in the story he never states his feelings about the adulterous relationship. He leaves the reader to make that determination and judgment, as it were.**

SM Do you think he creates the situation where he makes you feel sympathetic to the characters and what they were doing?

* **Ya. In a way so.**

SM Anybody who feels the same way?

Ok, let's look at some more examples in the text of how he makes you do some of the work in creating the story. Page 147, notice the narration of the initial encounter between Gurov and Anna. He's sitting there and thinking about these stories and easy conquest, etc. Another way Gurov operated is what you're asked to supply:

> "He beckons invitingly to the Pomeranian, and when the dog approached him, shook his finger at it. The Pomeranian growled; Gurov threatened it again."

Here we're seeing Gurov as sort of operator. Now what do you read into what Gurov is doing here?

* **He wants to bridge the distance between him and the lady by way of the dog.**

SM He plays off of the dog there getting it to come to him and then shaking his finger at him so it will growl. Why do you think he did that?

He starts, it will seem like, he initiated things.

* **He orchestrates things so that the lady will pay attention and recognize him and from there he could establish a relationship.**

SM He's really smooth. But he's smooth without being sinister. That's a hard combination to get. That's my initial impression anyway.

Let's look at the next sentence here:

"The lady glanced at him and at once dropped her eyes."

What's going on here? Read what she's doing. That's what Chekhov is asking you to do. Read the interpretation of her action. That's what Gurov is doing too, sitting and studying her.

* **She has played into his game. She has fallen into his trap.**

SM Ok! So why does she drop her eyes?

* **Probably she's shy. She doesn't like the way he looks at her.**

* **She's coy. Letting him know that she recognizes what he's up to.**

SM She couldn't be coy, though, because the whole description of what attracted him to her is her naivete, the lack of experience, the lack of angularity. Coyness has a sense of duplicity, and a lot of the story deals with the separation that comes with the public and the private self. For her there is no separation of the public and the private self. There's no guile in her up to that point.

* **I don't know about she having no guile at this point. I think she's naive, but there seems to be a difference between lack of guile and naivete.**

* **You may have a point there.**

SM Now, let's see how the conversation develops here.

"He doesn't bite," she said and blushed.
"May I give him a bone?" he asked; and when she nodded he inquired affably, "Have you been in Yalta long?"

Now what do we know that he's inferred about her before this question is asked? A couple of paragraphs above:

"Her expression, her gait, her dress, and the way she did her hair told him that she belonged to the upper class, that she was married, that she was in Yalta for the first time and alone, and that she was bored there.

He already knows that she is bored, and she asked

"Have you been in Yalta long?" And she said

"About five days."

"And I am dragging out the second week here," he said.

Now what's the difference between what she said and what he said and the tone of the conversation of the two. What's the difference between saying. "About five days," and I saying "And I am dragging out the second week here?"

* **He is telling her that he is alone, unaccompanied.**

* **He is saying I am here alone, I have nothing to do, and you're welcome to my companionship.**

SM Fine. These are all good comments and observations but what is Gurov telling about himself while working on her?

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SM Ya, but in here she hasn't even said anything yet, but he's read her condition. So he speaks to the unspoken condition and creates that link of sympathy.

* **So he's actually establishing a bond.**

SM Ya. I'm bored and you're bored, hey, let's get together and . . .

* **I feel he's very calculated, and also very confident of himself.**

SM You're probably right. You're probably looking back to the third

paragraph here where it says:

> "If she is here alone without husband or friend . . . it wouldn't be a bad thing to make her acquaintance."

But the interesting thing is that Gurov is in some way tactless and another way gusty. In another part she replies:

> "'Time passes quickly and yet it is so dull here!' she said, not looking at him."

And now they're playing tennis together. There's the serve and volley and now they're going back and forth and there's a rapport that's established here. But the way the reading and interpretation works is there's a few clues that are sort of hanging on the surface of the line, like sort of the tip of the iceberg, and you as the reader, as the analyst, have to fill in everything that is below. You know, it's not sitting there at the top, you have to sort of work with the dialogue that is there and fill in what's missing. See. And in fact, not only in Chekhov stories, it's true in any piece that you read, they're in effect sort of cue notes to fill in what's not there. It's a really interesting interplay that has to take place between text and reader for full meaning to be created. And that's something I want you to work on.

Now, what I want you to do is to get into groups of four and sort of make your own little circle and discuss the story further. In a sense there are four endings to the story. There's an ending to each section. And what I want you to do is for each group to take a look at a different one of the endings. Let's look first of all at the last sentence of the ending for instance at the end of part one. Go back to the last paragraph before the last sentence and think about what sort of ending is this. Where does it leave Gurov and Anna? How do you deal with Gurov and Anna at the end of this section? What is this section about as is suggested by the last sentence? So I want each group to work on that for five to ten minutes and then we'll all come back and talk to each other about how we read these different endings.

Groups of four discussion.

* **I don't know about you but this is a terrible ending. At first I thought there was more to it but the more I looked the least I saw.**

* **Why is it terrible? I found the ending fascinating. There's nothing predictable about it, and I like that a lot.**

* But why do you think he took this particular episode of the hotel room at this particular time and built everything up as though something else was going to happen other than what has always happened when he came to town? What was important about that?

* I thought he was very masterful here. He takes an everyday scene or situation and gives the impression that he was going to look at it in a different way. But he didn't. He celebrates the familiar and the everyday, and I think that is real cool.

* But he started getting bored very early. Gurov is not a dynamic character.

* But isn't that something like you'll crave for?

* Isn't it possible that for the first time he was looking at himself in the light of the woman and seeing how young she was, and probably was thinking that he was young too until he saw his reflection in the mirror and saw the age difference–about 20 years.

* Ya.

* But in the end, the question that they're trying to answer here seems to be, how could they themselves free themselves from these intolerable situations? How are they going to be able to do it? And the last paragraph seems to be saying that it's going to be difficult. They're not going to be able to do it as quickly as they want. What is the kind of resolution we would prefer? How would we have resolved this?

* At least we see that the end is not as predictable as is in formula writing.

* Ya.

* Yet, at the same time we are not surprised by it; because the story is true to life we accept this ending as plausible. Sometimes, in real life relationships, this is the way things end, in a hanging. Things are not always resolved. Couples don't always get together and live happily ever after.

* The thing that confuses me about their relationship is that there's no real separation, and that indefiniteness chokes me.

* He, I think is chicken. If he had run away with her, I would even have more respect for him for doing that than just remaining in the situation.

* **But doesn't the situation they find themselves in as it was, set them up not to do any thing? I mean even if they wanted to run away could he forget about his responsibilities at home?**

* **But he seems to not take action because he enjoys the situation.**

* **And so this duality, the fact that we all lead double lives, we all have our private lives which we are careful to separate from our public lives. I think Chekhov establishes very early in the story that this separation of private and public lives is dear to us.**

* **But he gets good at it. He seems to be the one manipulating her.**

* **But then she gets into it, and it doesn't take her too long to play the game too. Even at home she was always thinking about him. In fact she didn't stop thinking about him. But she was married. Both of them had the same situations.**

SM Ok, folks. I want you all to turn this way. First of all, looking at the end of number one here, there's something upsetting about . . .

* **The thing about . . . she's not as experienced as him. He saw in her an inexperienced woman and he liked that.**

SM You know we understand Anna in this story against a great array of other possibilities of other women. Of course you bring to the story in your mind some ideas about some types of women. But also the story provides you some examples of some types of women. So you see Anna as a person against a background of those other types of women. And I think there is something aesthetic about her, something like singling her out, that particular quality of Anna that is raised against that background. You'll recall that statement about the wife. In the beginning, the implication being that he did not marry her for love. He had found the wife when he was very young.

> She was a tall, erect woman with dark eyebrow, stately and dignified. And, as she said it herself, an intellectual.

No, why is it important that he said "an intellectual." Why will it be different to say "an intellectual" and "as she said of herself an intellectual?"

* **It's her ideas about herself, her self-absorption with herself as against someone else making that observation about her.**

SM It discredits first of all, the idea of whether she's intellectual or not. And it puts on her the title of saying things about herself. "She read a great deal,

used simplified spelling in her letters, called her husband, not Dimitry, but Dmitry, who, while privately considering her of limited intelligence, narrow-minded, dowdy, was afraid of her, and did not like to be at home."

Now, that's one woman but then in section two we have the other woman in Gurov's life. From the past he preserved the memory of carefree, good natured women whom love made gay and who were grateful to him for the happiness he gave them, however brief it might be; and of women like his wife who loved without sincerity, with too many words, affectedly, hysterically, with an expression that it was not love or passion that engaged them but something more significant; and of two or three others, very beautiful, friend women, across whose faces would suddenly flit a rapacious expression--an obstinate desire to take from life more than it could give, and these were women no longer young, capricious, unreflecting, domineering, unintellectual and when Gurov grew cold to them their beauty aroused his hatred and the lace in their lingerie seemed to him to resemble scales.

You see, Anna explains within the context of the other woman that Gurov protects(?). And when he said "There's something pathetic about her though," he thought. When he said "though" what does that say or what does that do to the sentence as a whole? What does the "though" do there?

* **It raises a legitimate concern and calls our attention to something that we would otherwise ignore.**

SM I think you're right. I think the "though" calls attention to setting apart here, because he's been thinking about her sort of potentially of her past experience and categories, so the "though" points to something different.

For those handling number two what did you come up with? "Time to go north, too, thought Gurov, as he left the platform. It's high time," the initial separation here.

Well?

* **There's something else here that he's not quite sure how to handle.**

SM Let's look at a situation in our country where a person from Michigan City goes to camp at Tampa during winter vacation. Now, it's one thing to meet someone by yourself a few hundred miles away from your home and have that kind of relationship with them over a couple of weeks on a vacation. I mean I'm not talking about those specific experiences, I'm talking about reading it here in the story. But there's something different about going back north. There's a certain kind of ambiance, a certain idea about rules of the game, how to act when you're at a resort area, how you act when

you're back in a work-a-day world. Do any of you agree with that? I mean when you say it's time to go north, it's time to go back to the life that you've lived there. Getting caught up with the world of all the activities that he does, you know, of the club playing cards and whatever it is they do there. So it's not just a transfer of place, it's a transfer of a whole association of ideas and attitudes that are tied up with that place too.

High time to go north, but in a way he's not just saying it's time for me to get back and have to get back to work but it's time for me to switch back to a mental attitude that is reflected by my Moscow life.

I want you to think for the story tomorrow whether he's using this kind of technique or not. In other words presenting the simple actions that people were doing and asking us to reel in the emotions that presumably accompany those actions, or whether she thought she was describing directly how the woman was feeling. I felt this way or I felt that way, because some observed about Gurov, throughout the story Gurov is unhappy but we don't see directly how Gurov himself is feeling. You just think. Everything else is quiet and he takes his coat and leaves. This is a physical action but yet it is very poignant and as a reader you're testing a lot of sensitivity or something what's going on here. You get a sense of feeling, but it's not because you're told about feeling, you're told about action.

Now, we're over here to the end of the story. What did your group have to say?

* **We all felt that it is sort of a real ending. In a sense it is like real life and you don't know what is going to happen.**

SM I'm interested in the way you phrase it. You said "it's kind of like a real ending" but it's also like real life or something like that. What would a real ending be in the way you are using real? What makes a real ending and why is it so?

* **One of us said that an ending is always the beginning of something else. So that complicates it even further. By real ending I suppose I mean there is a finishing, a solution of sorts. It's like you're satisfied that the event is concluded. But does it ever?**

SM Ok. What is it the ending of? If it is the ending of something and the beginning of something else, what is it the ending of?

* **It says it is the beginning of the most complicated part of their relationship. But I don't know.**

SM Well, it says two things at once. It says "It seemed as though in a little while a solution will be found, and it was clear to both of them.

Now, how much significance you want to read into (just beginning) that depends on the phrasing or the parallel structure where it says "it seems" on one hand and says "its clear" on the other hand. "It's clear" sounds a little stronger but I don't know whether that negates the "it seems" part of it. But you're right. The situation isn't necessarily wrapped up there. In a sense, for instance, "A Rose for Emile" is pretty well wrapped up, because you get the final clue to the mystery when you find iron grey strand of hair on the bed next to the corpse. That's like the piece of information that the whole story has been building towards. So there is a sense of resolution.

Does anyone have any other ideas?

* **Why this title for the story? "The Lady with the Pet Dog"?**

Sm Now here are some pitiful attempts by myself to think of another title for the story. Maybe you can come up with some others. Here are some titles I thought of:

Gurov's Lesson
A Tragic Affair
A Vacation in Yalta
A Mid-life Crisis

Well, after reading those and maybe laughing, tell me what is appropriate about the original title "The Lady with the Pet Dog"?

* **The title suggests an irony but I can't put my hand on it. But even the title seems to add to the indefiniteness of the story's ending.**

SM You're right, there's a sense of indefiniteness to this. And notice how we're moving into the story, a new person enters the stage. Now, when we read "This is what people said," who is saying that. Why is it said that way? Who is saying a new person appeared on the . . . It's the talk around town. And at that point, Anna is the property of everybody in the town in an equal way. In other words she is the lady with the pet dog to everyone in Yalta.

* **That's her only identity in the whole story. You don't know where she comes from. Who she is, you don't know. You don't know anything about her job or children. She doesn't say what makes her tick.**

SM Well, it's the link, the bridge. I think also that it shows here in the title in a way that she's perceived by the community at large. And in a sense the

story is a generic story of Gurov's previous love affair. That is until Gurov get's back to the club and can't handle things anymore, he can't move Anna out of his life.

Everything in Chekhov is done in a quiet way. I think the effects are very strong but they are also softly and gracefully given. I mean "The Lady with the Pet Dog" is a quiet title, and yet is very meaningful.

* **It seems that "The Lady with the Pet Dog" is a first impression. When we first see her that is the thing that attracts us about her, her pet dog. But as the story progresses, she becomes Anna and not the lady with the pet dog. The title seems to suggest to me how shallow Gurov was, until he started getting deeper into the relationship.**

SM I think you're right. When we look at the categories of past women, they are all not individual women they're representative women. There were women like this, and two or three women like that such that they were not individual women. But Anna comes on the scene and she is different, an individual.

* **Ok. Let's look at the story we have for tomorrow**

Honors in Literature.
February 27, 1991

This is a picture of Nathaniel Hawthorne, at about the age when he wrote this story ["The Artist of the Beautiful"]. And this is a picture of his wife, Sophia. The two of them have a love story which is very similar to the Brownings, to Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. They both got married when they were in their thirties. In both situations the wives were sick. Both of them had dominating fathers who didn't want their daughters to get married. Have you heard that story before? Emily Dickinson and others. Both of them got acquainted with their husbands-to-be when the husbands received a letter from them and said they would like to meet them, that they were writers and would like the opportunity to meet them.

Sophia Peabody, that's her name, had been injured in an accident and had very bad, probably migraine, headaches, and her father thought that she probably had better not get married. It is said that when Hawthorne came to visit the Peabody family in Salem, Massachusetts, at the request of the letter, that they fell in love at first sight. But it took them about four or five years before they finally agreed that they were going to get married. They didn't elope to go and live in Italy like the Brownings did. But in both cases, the women, I shouldn't say in both case; in Hawthorne's case his wife outlived him; in the Browning's case Robert outlived his wife. Hawthorne's wife outlived him by quite a bit.

The Hawthornes had three children. The son, Julian Hawthorne, became not as famous as his father, but he also was a writer who was published. Here is a picture of both the husband and wife.

When they were married they moved to Concord, Mass., and lived in this house which is called the "Old Knights." It was the parsonage for many years for the church in Concord. They were renting it out at that point, and he and the wife lived there. And he said that when they walked down that long pathway towards the house together after their wedding day "We felt like Adam and Eve in Paradise". That was the kind of idyllic marriage which they really had. It is recorded all through his work about the happiness of their marriage and the beautiful relationship they had. It was while they were living in that house that he wrote "The Artist of the Beautiful."

Hawthorne had three major writing periods, and this one occurred during his first major writing period. Most of his short stories were written before he wrote *The Scarlet Letter.* This one ["Artist of the Beautiful"] was written sometime between the years 1842 and 1844. So it gives you a little bit of the historical background for that.

This is a picture of the house in which Hawthorne was born. And this is the house in which the family lived in Concord, Mass. when he died. And he wrote a number of his works in there after he returned from Europe. He lived in Europe for about four years. He was the American consul at Liverpool in England. He was the official representative of the government in Liverpool. This is how he had made his money in order to write.

Ok. With that very brief background, let's turn to our story. Take out our copy of the story.

Your answers were very good responses, were excellent answers. We'll talk about that shortly.

*** I have heard that picture of Hawthorne was what he used in describing Dimsdale; that in his description of Dimsdale he was describing himself. I don't know whether you've heard that too.**

I haven't heard that particular story. There's no relationship between himself and Dimsdale. He was supposed to have been a very, in those days, I don't know how you'll describe him now, but he was said to be a very handsome man. He had very dark blue eyes, and was said to create quite a bit of sensation. Ok.

"The Artist of the Beautiful." We talked a little bit yesterday of some of the symbolic things he uses, and I think it will be well if we look at the first page and read down through it and see how Hawthorne sets the tone of the story.

What are the key words in the first paragraph?

> *"An elderly man, with his pretty daughter on his arm, was passing along the street, and emerged from the gloom of the cloudy evening into the light that fell across the pavement from the window of a small shop."*

What key words do we have? We have "gloom," and we have "light." What other opposites do we have?

***The elderly man and his daughter.**

The elderly man and the pretty daughter. Now, because he's elderly doesn't mean that he is ugly. But we have age differences. As we read through this, let's notice how many opposites we have. Because this is one of the things that Hawthorne is trying to set for us in the story.

We have extremes. And we talked about this yesterday, that one of the things that he constantly feels is the ideal is something that is more toward a balance.

> *It was a projecting window; and on the inside were suspended a variety of watches, pinchbeck, silver, and one or two of gold, all with the faces turned from the streets, as if churlishly disinclined to inform the wayfarers what o'clock it was. Seated within the shop sidelong to the window, with his pale face but earnestly over some delicate piece of mechanism on which was thrown the concentrated lustre of a shade lamp, appeared a young man.*

Now, do we have other opposites coming up?

You have the young man and the elderly man. Now, let's keep going and see if we can build up some more opposites.

> *"What can Owen Warland be about?" muttered old Peter Hovenden . . ."*

Now, here we have people identified by name. "Warland." Is there any significance to these names? Is there significance in *The Scarlet Letter* to the names? We have a daughter named Pearl. We have a mother name Hester, which is a form of Esther. We have Dimesdale and we have Chillingsworth, and Hawthorne all

through his stories makes his names significant. Not every name is symbolic, but that's one of his characteristics. You have in *Young Goodman Brown* you have Young, Goodman, Brown, you have his wife, Faith. You're not calling people Sally and Betty and Bill or any such names, there's some reason why--Why do you think he chose Warland, Owen Warland?

***Because the character essentially is at war with everyone else. No one seems to understand him, so in a figure he is at war.**

Yes, it has to do with his relationship with the outside, and there is even a war land going on even within him. Alright.

> *. . . muttered old Peter Hovenden, himself a retired watchmaker, and the former master of this same young man whose occupation he was now wondering at.*

Why is that important in this story? What fact are we learning in that sentence?

***He is a watchmaker, too.**

Both were watchmakers. In fact, who was Hovenden? His master.

***Does Hovenden mean anything?**

Do you think Hovenden means anything? Probably not as much as Warland does. It's not as obvious. If you have some ideas, fine. Alright, they both were watch makers. Peter Hovenden was the master who taught Owen Warland. What might that say to us later on in the story?

> *What can a fellow be about? These six months past I have never come by his shop without seeing him just as steadily at work as now. It would be a flight beyond his usual foolery to seek the perpetual motion;*

That was one of the things that in the middle of the 19th century people were always seeking. They were seeking for something that was the perpetual motion. So this is within the context of the 19th century.

> *And yet I know enough of my old business to be certain that what he is now so busy with is no part of the machinery of a watch.*

Ok. What's being implied, what's being said by this statement?

***That he has not been spending his time making watches.**

Why not so? But, if he has been spending his time on repairing watches, or making watches, or making a perpetual motion machine, would Hovenden have approved of him? Would he have called this "his usual foolery"?

> *"And yet I know enough of my old business to be certain that what he is now so busy with is not part of the machinery of a watch."*

What he's doing is not repairing watches. And that's what Peter Hovenden

can't abide. Could he have abide Owen Warland if he was just repairing watches? Yes. He would be making money.

We just got out of a faculty meeting in which we had a whole discussion of the difference between that which is "market driven" and that which is "mission driven." The difference, the transcendence; the difference between what kind of mission statement we should write for this university . . . that's what we were talking about. Is there a difference in the kinds of things you learn at a university? Perhaps a university is made up of both types of aims, and you cannot leave one out and have a university. You must have both. In fact, when you're talking about the transcendence of a vision, it is more than transmitting knowledge. It is more than sitting here in this class and saying Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote "The Artist and the Beautiful," and you can name characters in the story. Or being able to relate facts of the story or the plot of the story.

What is more important?

***What does it mean? How does it affect life?**

Exactly. What this is trying to say and relating it to now, relating as you think ten years from now upon this story. Or the ideas you have gained. It is exactly what Browning was saying in Andre del Sarto: "A man's reach must exceed what?"

***His grasp.**

His grasp. Isn't that what Owen Warland is trying to do? Isn't he trying to reach out beyond? He is a watchmaker. He could have remained a watchmaker. All his life he could have remained the repairer of watches, but isn't he trying to transcend that? And at the end when his butterfly is crumpled in the child's hands, all of you agree that it was not a defeat for Owen.

. . . Why was it not a defeat?

You wrote a good answer, why don't you take your sheet and read for us. You all did very well. I could have picked any one of you. I just picked her up.

***Read the sentences relating to that?**

No, read the whole thing.

***The crushed butterfly was not a defeat for Owen Warland. The symbol became of little value in his eyes. He had created beauty, and the change that occurred to the person himself while he made the butterfly was the thing that was of more value.**

It is a transcendence. It is more than just transmitting the object. It is going beyond the object. Alright, keep going.

***I think Owen was trying to share the spiritual and mystical side of life: the intangible unexplainable wanderings of the mind. Peter Hovenden and Robert**

Danforth symbolize the realism and rationality of mind, the conventional and practical aspect, the scientific calculating side of life. Owen had discovered it himself while making the butterfly, the material meaning of existence. Things solid and real in this life, die, decay and fade away, but the spiritual and seemingly unreal things last forever. The ideas of the spiritual magic is passed on through the ages is discovered by people all around the world. Artists are in search of this immortal sense, the spiritual aspect that tries to create invisible or musical reality of unreal ideas.

A very good answer to come out in ten minutes. R Read us yours. I will ask several of you to read us your answers. I could ask all of you to read your answers but we don't have time to do that. But just to get a little feel of how different people are relating to some of these essay questions.

Ok. Very good. R read on.

* **The nature of art and artist is not clean-cut or mechanical. After the art work is made artists cannot indulgingly absolve themselves in self-satisfaction and pleasure in the finished work. Rather, he like Warland, must transcend the accomplished and go to the higher ideals. Owen Warland's crushed butterfly was freed in its physical body and made into the higher ideal which will hover and fly with Warland as he sought his ideal to be the artist of the beautiful.**

Good. Next, we're going to be taking a look at some of the encounters. There are really six different encounters of things that happen in the story. And one of those that is most cruel to him in his relationship to Annie is that he thought Annie understood him. He thought there was hope for himself and Annie, and that she was responding to him. And when she doesn't respond, that is a real crush and a real defeat.

Alright, let's go ahead. Good answers, we're going to do some more of this later, but let's fit this into the story.

> *"Perhaps, father," said Annie, without showing much interest in the question, "Owen is inventing a new kind of timekeepers. I am sure he has ingenuity enough."*

Is there a difference between ingenuity and imagination and creativity?

***Yes.**

What is it?

***Ingenuity is practical.**

Does everything we make have to be practical? It depends on who you ask. R, everything you make has to be practical?

***It depends on how you define practical.**

Okay, we're getting all types of answers here. M, explain what you mean by practical.

***It's true, it depends on how one defines practical. What might be considered practical to one may not be practical to another person. But I think of practical in terms of functional use.**

How will you answer, R?

***The question is still what the person's idea of the practical is. And no one can set a standard for that. We can't just define practicality in terms of physical functions.**

So we can't define the word practical? Do you agree with that? Might your idea of what you consider practical change? Is what you consider practical today the same thing as what you considered practical five years ago? Anything else?

***Usually, practicality is related to utility. There is a sense in which we all agree that if something can be utilized, then it has a practical function. But the artist looks at his or her creation and considers it practical. That the non-artist does not see it the artist's way is immaterial.**

Alright. Is there such thing as art for art sake or there is that constant conflict? There are those who would say in interpreting art it must be useful. A poem must mean something. A painting must say something to you that means something? And then there are those who say, no, a piece of art can just exist. One of the poets says, a poem does not have to mean, it just is. And I think there is a great deal of truth in that.

Do you have any pieces of art that are just being, R? What is your philosophy of art? It's nice to have an artist in class that we can call on.

***Well, if anybody goes and enjoys a piece of work, that art work will have a practical function because he finds entertainment to it. So you will say that because the piece is beautiful to your eyes, it is practical already. If you look at a painting and you don't see meaning in it, then you might have to go down to it physically, what it is, as being thick paint on a canvass or whatever, or sculpture that's black or whatever. And as you look at it you basically try to understand it as it is, not trying to find other meanings to what it is. As you do that you're already entertaining ourself with thinking, and looking, and just experiencing. So a piece of work already has a practical function of moving you to think.**

Because we can experience. Alright, let's go ahead.

> *"Pooh, child! he has not the sort of ingenuity to invent anything better than a Dutch toy."*

What's the tone of Hovenden's voice?

***Sarcasm.**

Sarcasm. Scorn. As you go on and look through the story, you will find that there is a word which describes Hovenden very frequently. And the kind of laugh; it's not a happy, joyous giggled. What is it called, this kind of laughter? Today, to say that someone is sneering at me is different than saying someone giggled at me. Or he smiled at me. It is the connotation of the word. What other word can you think of that deals with smile? Or the way we smile?

***Grimace.**

Ok. And there are all sorts of ways in doing that, isn't it. There are the intonations of sounds. And when don't have sound as we have on paper, we have to put particular descriptive words with it. So that we get the feeling of that tone. "Pooh, child! He has not the sort of ingenuity to invent anything better than a Dutch toy."

***Even here we're seeing a certain gradation in what is practical. A toy is practical to a baby who is playing with it, but we're seeing him degrade that. Anything that is not of adult utility is not practical.**

It reminds me of what Hawthorne said in the introduction of the *Scarlet Letter*. He is talking about his Puritan ancestors, and he is saying my Puritan ancestors will say, oh "He's nothing but a writer of story books." And that is a derogatory statement because the Puritan would never write anything that was for entertainment or purely for the story. It had to have deep philosophical, religious use. So he says, my Puritan ancestors will look at me and say he's nothing but a story writer. But that is not true that he's a writer only of storybooks. That is what my Puritan ancestors will say.

> *"A plague on such ingenuity! All the effect that ever I knew of it was to spoil the accuracy of some of the best watches in my shop. He would turn the sun out of its orbit and derange the whole course of time, if, as I said before, his ingenuity could grasp anything bigger than a child's toy!"*

***That statement that says he has not the ingenuity to do anything better than a Dutch toy, isn't that in a way sustained by the fact that in the end the butterfly ends up just as a toy?**

It is ironical. It is the child that sees it as a toy and plays with it as a toy. Except there is a certain inheritance that we may talk about.

> *"Hush, father! He hears you!" whispered Annie.*

Now, that gives you the impression that Annie still has some sympathy toward Owen. She could have said, if she didn't care what was said, "Go on, father, talk louder so he can hear you." But she said, "Hush . . .

What are some of the characteristics of Owen that we're beginning to discover?

***Subtle.**

There is subtlety. What else.

***Delicate.**

Delicate. What are some other words we can use to describe him? When did he work?

***At night.**

After hours. He's still probably fixing watches. That's what keeps him in the eye of the community. He's not just viewed as an eccentric old artist. He still can fix watches.

So Peter Hovenden and his daughter Annie plodded on without further conversation.

What does the word plod suggest? They plodded on without further conversation. Are they sensitive? Creative?

And they had no further conversation. They had nothing to say. It's almost like, well, we should carry on a conversation but I don't have anything else to say.

. . . until in a by-street of the town they found themselves passing the open door of a blacksmith's shop.

Let's notice how he begins to build up the contrasts again. We have just come past the watchmaker's shop. Now we're coming to a blacksmith's shop. What does a blacksmith's shop connote on your mind?

***Dark. Heat.**

***Sweat. Fire. Iron.**

Brute force? Loud noises. What was connotative in the watchmaker's shop? . . . Let's go on.

Within was seen the forge.

Do all of you know what a forge is? By the end of this you'll have a vocabulary of words that does not really fit in the 1990s. In fact, you have to go to a working history museum somewhere in order to see a blacksmith at work. How many of you have seen a blacksmith at work? Do you know what a forge is.

> *Within was seen the forge now blazing up and illuminating the high and dusky roof, and now confining its lustre to a narrow precinct of the coal-strewn floor, according as the breadth of the bellows was puffed forth or again inhaled into its vast leathern lungs.*

What do you get the feeling that this is talking about?

You know Hawthorne very well, there are the descriptions that he always uses to describe the underworld, the nether world. In fact, in "Ethan Brand" when Ethan Brand cast himself into the fire, and destroys himself, commits suicide, he commits what's to Hawthorne was the unpardonable sin, he flings himself to utter destruction, the description is very similar to this. You have the fire, the blazing of touch here. You have the noises, and you have eerie shadows, the smell of smoke.

In the intervals of brightness it was easy to distinguish objects in remote corners of the shop and the horseshoes that hung upon the wall; in the momentary gloom the fire seemed to be glimmering amidst the vagueness of unenclosed space. Moving about in this red glare and alternate dusk was the figure of the blacksmith, well worthy to be viewed in so picturesque an aspect of light and shade, where the bright blaze struggled with the black night.

It's very important that all of this happened at night; it's that time of the day in the 24-hour period. It happens after hours, the same time they visited Owen.

> *. . . as if each would have snatched his comely strength from the other. Anon he drew a white hot bar of iron from the coals, laid it on the anvil, uplifted his arm of might,*

What description did we have of Owen? What described his strength?

***Delicate.**

And always Danforth is described how?

Yes. The man of strength. Big. He had muscles. I don't know about muscles because it was never used, but he had an arm of might.

> *and was soon enveloped in the myriads of sparks which the strokes of his hammer scattered into the surrounding gloom.*

Now, what are we to assume from this? Of whom did Peter Hovenden oppose?

***Danforth.**

It's interesting that Annie is the girl whom both men have their eye upon. And who did Annie choose? Obviously in the story she chooses Danforth. And this is part of the crisis that Owen faces as the story progresses.

> *"Now, that is a pleasant sight."*

What is the pleasant sight? Him working. This forge and all this mighty power.

> *"I know what it is to work in gold; but give me a worker in iron after all is said and done."*

Now, Hovenden starts out as a what?

***Watchmaker.**

He's a watchmaker. But what is he saying? He is denying his own trade, his own practice. He is saying he prefers the worker in iron, after all is said and done.

***Wasn't he a watchmaker all his life? Why didn't he change professions all these years?**

At least at this point this is where he's changed. This is where he has come forth. Because you wonder how would he have worked all his life as a watchmaker if he had wanted to be a blacksmith?

***Isn't it also possible that he has designs for the daughter to marry Danforth, and so he is constantly trying to turn her attention to Danforth. Consequently, he tries to depreciate everything Owen does?**

That's another way of looking at it.

He spends his labor upon reality.

And there's a key sentence. What does Owen spend his labor on?

***Beautiful things.**

A concept. An idea. It is not the beautiful yet. This guy spends his labor upon a reality. You can see it.

What say you, daughter Annie?

And now what's her reply?

"Pray don't speak so loud, father."

And what was her reply to Owen?

"Hush!" Don't speak so loud, father, . . . Robert Danforth will hear."

"And what if he should hear me?" said Peter Hovenden.

He's got to make it extra loud so that Danforth could hear.

"I say again, it is a good and wholesome thing to depend upon main strength and reality."

What did he say before in his analysis of Owen?

... and to earn one's bread with the bare and brawny arm of a blacksmith.

Make your money; with this kind of power. This kind of reality.

A watchmaker gets his brain puzzled by his wheels within wheels, or loses his health or the nicety of his eyesight.

Have you seen a watchmaker that uses his own eyesight without a magnifying glass.

. . . and finds himself at middle age, or a little after, past labor at his own trade and fit for nothing else, yet too poor to live at his ease. So I say once again, give me main strength for my money. And then, how it takes the nonsense out of a man. Did you ever hear of a blacksmith being such a fool as Owen Warland yonder?"

"Well said, Uncle Hovenden!" shouted Robert Danforth from the forge, in a full, deep, merry voice, that made the roof re-echo.

He was loud. He had to shout over all that noise. The very noise of the bellows, and the forge, and the fire.

"And what says Miss Annie to that doctrine? She, I suppose, will think it a genteeler business to tinker up a lady's watch than to forge a horseshoe or make a gridiron."

Annie drew her father onward without giving him time for reply.

Now let's end there because we could go on and on with every paragraph.

What is it, do you think, Hawthorne is trying to say with this introduction? As related to the whole story. As related to the poem I gave you.

Days

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after their will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.
I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

Emerson is not writing this poem in relationship with the story. The two were written about the same time but neither one saw the other.

Now, that's the poem, let's go back and analyze it. Who are the daughters of Time?

***The Days.**

The Days are the daughters of Time. Think in your imagination of the calendar. And one day marching behind the next. The days, the weeks, the months, the year. And you have these days marching.

Why are they hypocritical? Why are they hypocrites? Any ideas? Why did he call them hypocritic days? What's a hypocrite.

***Has something to do with wanting others to do things you would not do yourself.**

It's one of those things Christ called the Pharisees. Ye, hypocrites. You say one thing but do another.

Why are they hypocritic Days? Have you ever gotten up in the morning and said to yourself, this is what I'm going to do this day. Have you ever gotten everything done that you expected to get done? The day is not what it looks like. You can have a beautiful sunny day and still have the most awful tragedy. But these Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days, they're muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes.

What's a barefoot dervish? You didn't look it up in the dictionary? You're

stuck with another word you're not sure of. There are several of them like that.

Among the Mohammedans they had a mendicant order or the order of the poor; they are muffled, barefoot, they're not probably dressed up properly. And they're muffled.

What does muffled mean?

Muffled means something that's covered. A muffled sound is not a full sound.

What's dumb? Silence. We're not talking about intelligence. A muffled sound. And they march singly in an endless file.

And what are they bringing?

They bring diadems and fagots in their hands.

What's a diadem? A crown. A jewelled crown.

What about fagots?

***Touches.**

No, not a touch. They're sticks. Fagots are sticks you start fire with. And they bring diadems and fagots in their hands. Are these opposites? Old sticks and beautiful crowns. Here come the days marching after one another and they are all carrying something. And they're dumb. They're not saying a word.

What is today for you? The day passing by is carrying a diadem or is it carrying a fagot? I don't want you to answer, but think about it.

To each.

Now, who are the "each"?

***Us.**

Of us. Myself, to all of us, "they offer gifts after his will."

Who are the "his"? Person. His or hers. We're talking generic here. So what is this Day carrying diadems and fagots offering some gifts after whose will?

It depends upon me. It doesn't depend upon Days. Which am I going to take? Am I going to take the fagots or the diadems. It's my will. Alright, to each they offer gifts after his will.

Bread, kingdoms, stars and sky that holds there all.

These are the gifts which they are bringing to us.

Bread, which stands for what?

For practical things. The bread is what sustains us.

What about the "kingdoms"?

***Power.**

Power. Certainly, some people will take kingdoms over bead.

What might the "stars" be?--Dreams. Visions.

But what you take that includes everything?

***The sky.**

He thinks the sky holds them all. . . . .

I, that means the poet, or you, myself . . .

I in my pleached garden --

"Pleached" here means the intertwined branches that line the archway.

I in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,

Forget my morning wishes.

"Morning wishes" suggesting what he planned to do. I Forgot my morning wishes, and I hastily took a few herbs and apples--bread, a few herbs, a few apples.

And what was the response of the Day?

Turned and departed silent. (And) I, too late,

Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

In other words, the Day is saying, what did you have?

You were willing to settle for just the necessities, just enough to get by, when you could have had everything. The sky.

Now, does Hovenden understand the truth, that man can't live by bread alone. We do not live by bread alone. We don't live just by the forge.

Well, we're not finished. We'll continue tomorrow.

American Literature II
January 14, 1991

"Editha," by William Dean Howells, is that right? Who is William Dean Howells, class? —— I have to tie my shoes [he sits on the steps of the open floor and ties a loose shoe-lace on tightly]. Oh! Who is William Dean Howell's according to your biographical sketch? Did you read your homework over the week end? Who is William Dean Howells? What is he famous for? What's his nickname? [silence] -- Hello, anybody here?

I believe I must begin to give pop quizzes, I believe that. Yes, you're not doing your homework. You paid all this money and you're not doing your homework. You make me feel like my life has no value -- Why else won't you do your home work? You pay close to $5,000 a year, right? And you don't do your homework.

William Dean Howells, for those who know but are afraid to say, was one of the fathers of modern American letters. He was a consummate critic and promoter. In other words, if William Dean Howells took notice of you, there was potential for success. There was a black man called Paul Lawrence Dunbar of Dayton, Ohio. He wrote to WDH. WDH said "I like your stuff" and Lawrence Dunbar's career took off right away. Another fellow called Brownswith, the fellow I wrote my dissertation on, he wrote WDH and Howell said "I don't like you," and Brownswith languished away. Right.

So Howells represented perhaps the premier literary figure in American letters. He was an editor, prolific writer, essayist, critical thinker, okay. So when anything of critical value happened and he placed his stamp of approval on it, then it went through. If not, you just kinda languished along. Alright?

* **Our text also said he had the power to make or break careers but he exercised such power tactfully and responsibly.**

Oh yeah, that's what it says, but I know better. Because I did my dissertation on a fellow he treated very badly. So the text says that, good, but I know better. Do you folks know Robert Frost beat his woman. Do you know Robert Frost? Did you folks know he beat his wife? That he stole money from the place he worked? Okay. I know WDH was tactful, but I can be tactful and still drive you out of my office. Okay, Good for the textbook but we must fill in some gaps.

WDH had a very famous novel called *The Rise of Silas Lapman*, right. *The Rise of Silas Lapman*. That novel dealt with the moral dilemma of business. WDH is partly a realist, and partly a moralist in his writing. On one hand he wants to tell it like it is, but on the other hand he wants it to always have a "correct" ending. Alright. Or at least come out having the right moral position he wanted. He's not what you'll call a true naturalist or true realist. He's getting there. And he also wrote for the educated classes--the folks who couldn't take too much veracity, or verisimilitude or reality in the literature. But the story we have today is a powerful caricature of what?

* **War.**

Thank you. And what war are we concerned with here. What's the date for it? According to your textbook.

* 1905.

Thank you. It's in your textbook. This is a simple question for a text, right?

And obviously WDH took a clear position on war. A clear position. So I guess it's kinda fortunate that we're discussing this story today, and by midnight tomorrow we may be at war ourselves in the Persian Gulf. The deadline is the 15th of January.

Who can tell me what WDH's basic position in this piece, well, let's say the narrator, what is the narrator's basic position about war based on this story about our friend Editha? Am I with you still? What is the narrator's position as it comes out? As he takes us carefully through some changes, through some plots, what is his theme, his thesis, the narrator's?

* **He abhors war.**

Good, abhors. What else? The narrator's position about war.

* **He glamorizes war.**

He glamorizes war. Good. Another comment. How about romanticizing?

"Editha" is romanticizing the notion of war. So I think the narrator is setting up a plot. I need this character, and that character, and that setting and this dialogue to express my point of view. So once again, fiction, becomes a vehicle of statement. Look at the story of the prodigal son. I mean Christ made the story up but it served a purpose. In Christ's hands, the purpose of faith.

What is interesting about literature is, not only can we appreciate the statement, but we can also enjoy the truthfulness of the art form. We can look at how Christ took . . . and how he chose this act from that act and how the prodigal associated himself twice -- "I will arise and go to my father . . . " And when he gets there the father said, shut up. Let me get you the ring and the robe and the shoes and all these stuff. He has manipulated action to express a point of view. That is what fiction is. Shakespeare knows that.

How does "Editha" open, class? How does the story open? What has happened to him?

"The air was thick with the war feeling".

Electrifying. What attitude is expressed in that? What tone? "The air was thick."

***Tension**

Tension. What else?

***Excitement.**

Excitement.

***Anticipation.**

Anticipation. Okay class. So the narrator is setting us up right away. "Like the electricity of a storm which has not yet crust."

She's sitting there telling herself . . . ahh! Do I love him enough to let him go? As if she totally controlled George. You all got that, right.

And they weren't even married yet. You all got that, right? Don't let anybody control you until you are married, and not even then.

She decided she could not let him stay. She had decided that she could not let him stay.

What is going on here? Obviously, the narrator does not like Editha. Agreed?

"George."

"He had quickened his steps in mystical response."

Oh, give me a break.

"To her mystical urgency, before he could have heard her; now he looked up and answered, "Well?"

"Oh, how united we are!" she exulted, and then she swooped down the steps to him. "What is it?" she cried.

"It's now," he said, and he pulled her up to him and kissed her.

She kissed him back intensely, but irrelevantly, as to their passion, and uttered from deep in her throat "How glorious!"

"It's war." Ha.

Let's go down and celebrate the fact that we now have war in the Persian Gulf. That's what she's saying here. How glorious it is. The country is at war.

Ladies. What role is Editha going to play in the war? Look at the last line. "I will protect him, and make his love for her save him from himself."

What else? He's obviously a pacifist. He doesn't want to go to war. He's a conscientious objector, right. But what does she say? "There's no way you can be my man and not go to war."

Here, she has a warped romantic view of war. This view can be used to symbolize the ideas of those who somehow feel that war is glorious. Like Saddam Hussein thinks this is a holy war. I can go get killed and I'll go to Havana somewhere. Holy war, but get killed. There was a guy on TV yesterday who said, look, I really don't want to die, but if the president calls war, I'm willing to die." Some say "I'll really don't want to die, but it's my job."

Alright. Let's discuss "Editha" now. What happens between George and Editha in the next few pages? What is the nature of their conversation?

***She tries to be assertive.**

How does she do that?

***No, she tries to brighten the relationship.**

To brighten the relationship. Give me some examples from the text. What does she say or do? Hmm? She said, look. If you really love me you will go to war and die. You heard that? I ask you how in the world I can get my life back here in -- Mississippi, or Minnesota --- You know? Back here at home when my husband, my love, my boy friend, my fiance, whoever you are did not go and serve in honor and didn't get killed. I'm sorry, you just can't shame me like that. There's no way in the world I'm going to hold up my head in this community and you're not going to war. Even if you loved me, you're going to have to die, or get shot, or loose an eye, or lose a leg. Then come back and then I would love you for how long? -- "Time and eternity." Hmm.

***That's the sacred war.**

The sacred war. Jihad, a holy war. So Editha is saying, look . . . I think she represents all those folks saying look, this is a war. Either you die for it or you leave. It's like saying, "This is America, either you like it or you leave it."

Why is it that George doesn't say, "Look, you can take your love and shove it, I ain't going to that war." That's a bad attitude, isn't it? Ok. Love, I don't need your love. Why is it George doesn't say, Look, I am working on becoming a lawyer. My family has a long history of being pacifists, anti-war people, why do I have to go to war now?

What do you think is George's problem?

***He needs to be dominated.**

He has a dominating mother, may be. Ok. So George needs to be dominated. Then George needs to die. Okay.

Why is it that the narrator doesn't put the motivation to George and let him say I don't need this. I'm out of this?

It is because George himself has never found out his own values. He wanted to be a minister. Now he's going to be a lawyer. Next week he's going to be a dentist. Who knows, there are people like George who have not yet identified what they're going to do.

***What about Editha?**

Editha has a bad idea, but George has no idea at all.

Haven't you heard a decisive kind of person say something like this? I don't need you anymore. I don't care what you think, I'm going to be there. I am going to church this morning and I don't care what you think or do. I am going to church. I don't care what you all do, I'm going to church.

You see. The importance of personal resolve. I know exactly what I am going to do therefore I'm not going to worry about what I'm not going to do. Or I know what I'm not going to do, that's why I know what I'm going to do.

George has not quite figured out, as a matter of fact, when George decided he wanted to enlist, how did he do that? -- He got drunk. Right? He got himself very well inebriated and out of that stand he went in and got himself enlisted in the army. Saying what?

***He was frightened.**

What about the problem with his decision? He knew exactly what he didn't want to face the reality of his situation. So he went and got drunk. Got high. The question to me:

What does Editha say about that? He comes up and calls her captain and gives her a drunken kiss and what have you. This gives you a portrait of their romantic love. There was just nothing there. There's no passion because she wants his soul in war.

The question I'm going to ask you is how did Editha respond to the fact that he got drunk and made the decision.

***She didn't like it.**

How did she show that? She said, "Don't do it again. And what did he say to that?

I promise. I promise. If I'm going to go to war I can get drunk at least and make that decision. But basically he said "I promise."

So Editha said, I don't care how you make the decision. I don't care if you were drunk. I don't care if you had your hands behind your back. I don't care how you make the decision as long as you make the decision. But don't do it again. Because I couldn't stand to think that my boyfriend, down there in South America is dependent on drink to keep him fighting.

So obviously Editha is becoming more and more reprehensible as a leader. How many of you really like Editha? Does anybody like her? Anybody. She's a witch.

***She knows that she wants, at least. There's something good about her character.**

That's right? Then let her go to war. Alright. Let her go to war then. Let her go and get shot at.

Well, in this little letter she has written she's going to give a little -- She has a little ribbon, little flowers, and a little ring attached to it. What's the significance of that little letter? Just in case she read it?

That's her last ditch effort. I will not be -- I love you. Oh, I love you. Well.

He goes off to war. And what happens.

***He is killed.**

He is immediately killed. Now, I'm intrigued. Supposed George hadn't died. But he came back with both legs shot off, you think Editha would have taken care of him and loved him? But he was killed. And he had to be killed. That advances the plot.

What do you think Editha is going to do? What is her great concern? I'll go back to his mom. Hm! As if she has earned some type of honor in his family. You know. You folks haven't seen such gathering where somebody came and tried to take over?

But Editha believes that because she loves George so much, she has earned the right to represent him to his mother. So she takes the long trip to see his mother.

What does she find when she got there? What does the mother do.

***She tells her to do away with the black dress.**

Take off that black robe. Take it off! Why?

You know he didn't want to go to war. In our family you observe that during the civil war we had a bad reputation. We didn't want to fight. We are pacifists, we are known to be anti-war. You knew that. Why in the world did you use the power of your love and influence to make him go?

It is amazing how much power a woman can have over a man, especially if they're drunk.

Rule number one, be careful who you love. Rule number two, don't get drunk. You all get that? Be careful who you love, don't get drunk.

She does not like at all the idea that Editha would position herself as someone grieving for George. And it is true that Editha wants to share the grief, the loss of George with his mother. It's kind of like, "I've come to celebrate with you the loss of your son. Let me tell you about all the wonderful things your son did back East. Let me tell you some of the wonderful things we did together.

And his mother cut her short and showed her the way out.

How does Editha take that? How does she respond to that angry rejection? . . . "She's just rude."

***Vulgar.**

Vulgar. That's the word. She's just a vulgar old woman. She does not even have the courtesy of even trying to act nice.

You know the situation where people meet who don't like one another and still act nice? No, it ain't going to happen here. No acting nice. You know, and that's what Editha did not believe.

You know, I've come all the way from the East. I love George. George was my life. I can never live without George. "I love your son so much." And what does she say.

You hypocrite, get out of my house.

Now, this is where the narrator suspends the action of the story and makes a comment, directly to the reader. The narrator says, you know here I want to make my point. My political point. No, she didn't expect him to get killed. She just

expected him to kill someone else. Some of those foreigners. She expect George, her George to kill some of those people whose mothers and fathers she never knew. People whose faces he has never seen.

The woman lifted her powerful voice and said "I thank my God he didn't live to kill. I thank my God they killed him first, and didn't have blood on his hands."

She dropped her eyes and looked at her hands. "What do you have that ring on for? Take it off! Take it off, before I tear it from your hands."

What statement is the narrator making about war?

***That war is not romantic.**

What again.

***That there are no winners in war.**

***Thank you. There is no such thing as being on the right side in war.**

Follow the troops as they go to the Gulf War. Your fathers, your uncles, your friends, your cousins, etc. As they position themselves against the enemies, 15 and 16 year old Iraqis, and look down the barrels at them and kill them. That's glorious. That's glorious.

I have friends, including my brother, who went to Vietnam and they killed hundreds of enemy soldiers, who are proud of their role and always glory in what they did. We never think about the casualties--children, old people, women, and the sick.

I want to read you the last section of the story.

> *The lady who was passing the summer near Balcom's Works was sketching Editha's beauty, which lent itself wonderfully to the effects of a colorist. It had come to that confidence which is rather apt to grow between artist and sitter, and Editha told her everything.*

"To think of your having such a tragedy in your life!" The lady said. She added" "I suppose there are people who feel that way about war. But when you consider the good this war has done -- how much it has done for the country! I can't understand such people, for my part. And when you had come all the way out there to console her--got up out of a sick-bed! Well!"

"I think," Editha said, magnanimously, "She wasn't quite in her right mind; and so did papa."

"Yes," the lady said, looking at Editha's lips in nature and then at her lips in art, and giving an empirical touch to them in the picture. "But how dreadful of her! How perfectly--excuse me--how vulgar!"

A light broke upon Editha in the darkness which she felt had been without a gleam of brightness for weeks and months. The mystery that had bewildered her was solved by the word; and from that moment she rose from grovelling in shame and self-pity, and began to live in the idea.

Take a look at that last line. I like that line, "and began to live in the idea!"

Now, if you want to read the whole story again, right there it is, in the ideal.

What is Editha going to do now. What has happened to her. What has she found in her meeting with her, the artist in the bed and breakfast house? What has she found in her?

***Sympathy.**

Sympathy to her point of view. Ya. I cannot understand anybody who does not realize that we have to kill three million Iraqis to survive. If you cannot see that then you are totally unAmerican. That's what's going on here. You see. And after months of grovelling in shame and self pity, Editha finds someone who says, Editha, you did the right thing. You made your contribution to your country by sacrificing your lover who got killed. In effect, you are a war hero.

Maybe Editha wanted to get into the war herself--transference?--Psychology majors? She couldn't go, so she got someone to go for her so that she could get the glory, the praise, and the honor. Recently, they had one of the last remaining widows of some war on TV, and you couldn't believe the pride. There's a lot of honor in that.

That's what she thought she was going to get from his mother. But the mother, representing the narrator's point of view believed that war, no matter how you romanticize it, no matter how you dress it up, is always barbaric. Always.

So I think in that respect, our narrator here makes the statement that war cannot be romanticized, cannot be made pretty. And that's it.

Now we talk about climax. Big word here. The climax is sort of like where the conflict is resolved. Who or what is she in conflict with? So the climax of the story, the point of the highest tension is where there is a resolution--her resolve to go on living in the ideal.

Who's the protagonist here? What character would you say you followed most closely? What character has the values that you identify with?

***George.**

For tomorrow read "Daisy Miller" by Henry James, page 297.

*** Indicate student comments.**

Appendix B

SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS

American Literature

I. Please Identify the Authors of the Following Selections:

1. Roughing It _____
2. Chickamauga _____
3. White Heron _____
4. The Outcast of Poker Flat _____
5. Editha _____
6. Letters From the Earth _____
7. A White Heron _____
8. Daisy Miller _____
9. The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County _____

_____

10. The Revolt of "Mother" _____

II. Please identify the selection in which the following characters or settings occur:

1. A forlorn mountain pass in November _____
2. The rolling woodlands of Tennessee _____
3. A mining camp in California _____
4. The lush marshlands of New England _____
5. A prosperous country farm _____
6. A simple home in rural Iowa _____
7. The hustling streets of Rome _____
8. Mr. Giovenelli _____

9. Jim Blaine's modest cabin _____

10. Parson Walker's ill wife _____

III. Please provide the title of the selection that best projects the following themes. Some selections will be used more than once:

1. Even people well-known for anti-social lifestyles can d acts of remarkable kindness. _____

2. Over-confidence is the end of luck _____

3. One good tale must lead to another _____

4. There is no sense in resisting what Fate is deciding for one's future. _____

5. An individual must be able to make a decision and have the conviction to stand with it. _____

6. One part of maturity is be accountable to the social conventions and customs of whatever setting one may find herself. _____

7. The growth in one's perception and vision is by necessity an individual and private experience.

_____

8. Absolutely nothing is romantic about war, even when children play mock war scenes _____

9. Love is a present action and a future promise. _____

_____

10. Man is absolutely crazy if he thinks that he can go to Heaven and suddenly everything will be perfect.

_____

IV Please identify the author who wrote the following passage. Some authors will appear more than once.

1. "She was a good soul--had a glass eye and used to lend it to old Miss Wagner, that hadn't any . . . _____

_____

2. "All nations look down upon all other nations.
All nations dislike other nations. _____
_____

3. Day by day closer around them drew the snowy circle, until at last they looked from their prison over walls of dazzling white, that towered twenty feet above their heads.
_____

4. To him it was a merry spectacle. He had seen his father's Negroes creep upon their hands and knees for his amusement--had ridden them so, "making believe they were his horses."
_____

5. All the while, in her duplex emotioning, she was aware that now at the very beginning she must put a guard upon herself against urging him . . . "
_____

6. "'American girls are the best girls', he said . . . "
_____

7. "Bring your gifts and graces and tell your secrets to this lonely country child."
_____

8. "Sarah Penn went across the room as though it were a tragic stage. She flung open the door and disclosed a tiny bedroom, only large enough for a bed and a bureau with a path between."
_____

9. "Oh, yes, I have observed them. Seen them--heard them--and kept out of their way." _____

10. "Yes, that letter of yours, that came back with his other things, left him free."
_____

V. Bonus Essay Section:

Please prepare a descriptive essay on the essential factors that had significant impacts on the literature between 1965 and 1914. Your response must be typed, double-spaced and have at least three main supports. Bonus points will be awarded on number of points needed to ensure a final grade of "A."

Appendix C

SAMPLE GRADED STUDENT PAPERS

Honors in Literature

The Function of an Artist

In human society, the function that individuals play justify their existence as a useful member of society. All useful citizens are functioning nuts and bolts. Teachers teach, doctors heal the sick, lawyers claim to carry out justice and engineers build and repair. What do artists do?

During the Renaissance and the times before, artists had specific practical functions just as teachers and engineers do today. Michelangelo was an artisan as much as he was an artist. He made public monuments such as the "David" for Florence. He made tombs for the rich and the powerful--Pope Julius II and the Medici family are salient examples. Beyond this he was a decorator of the ceiling and a wall of the Sistine Chapel. He carved marbles which were objects of adoration in chapels and churches. he carved statues which were placed in courtyards for the enjoyment of his patrons.

Michelangelo had a social function as the maker of object. The society he lived in required the objects he made. he worked for the rich and the powerful. He was a "servant" under the roof of wealthy patrons.

Thinking optimistically, even though Michelangelo made beautiful objects of decoration for the rich, these decorations transcend their functions as decorations. They relieve people from the mundaneness of life. And beyond the arm-chair luxury of their presence, these objects are able to instill into people a sense of self-worth. The magnificence of Michelangelo's work, made by such a great genius of the human race, can only give the illusion that his society and the human race are just as if not greater than, the divine artist.

The existence of artists, their functions and their roles have altered greatly since the Renaissance. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's story of *The Artist of the Beautiful*, Owen Warland no longer works for his society. In fact, he defies it. transcends it and becomes a mystical pilgrim, searching for his own ideal. Warland functioned on a purely personal level, free from social obligations, free to pursue his own ideal.

Like Owen Warland, contemporary artists today do not have set social obligations as Michelangelo did. The art revolutions of the past century have made artists responsible only to themselves. Art for art's sake, artists for art: artists are free to pursue their own aims, away from the demands of a patron or society. From Edward Manet to Paul Gaugin, Jackson Pollock to Jasper Johns, artists simply make art, that is their role in society.

This has come about because of a shift in attitude of people towards the place of art in society. The necessity of art from art's sake has been accepted by society. Artists have been incorporated into society no longer as artisans, as Michelangelo was, but they,

according to Donald Kuspit, have been made special "creative saviours" of society (61). They are not only artists but a group of specially ordained truth-bearers who declare the Truth through the "sincerity" and "authenticity" of their work (60).

This messianic-status of artists has recently been challenged. As artists make art which claims to be truthful and sincere, recent scholarship suggests that they are actually "inflating" a bankrupt society. Their faith in their own authenticity is accepted by society, so that as the worth of art is bolstered, so is the society:

> The result was a self-proclaimed successful society and art--with no questions allowed to be asked, no eyebrows allowed to be raised. (61)

Kuspit suggests that art and society joined together in a state of mutual glorification. It is a dark and grim picture. By bolstering the worth and importance of society, artists make something bad look good. As Michelangelo painted and sculpted, was he not inflating the worth of a decadent papacy, a bankrupt society, a doomed people?

Then why do artists work? What is their role if every one of their actions inflates the worth of their society and is therefore sinister?

Hawthorne suggests a poignant course of action. Owen Warland worked on his butterfly for himself. He could not worry about the results of his work, he simply needed to do it. Artists can never justify their activity in terms of its social utility for they can never make work that will raise the consciousness of others--the work is only crushed. The audience will never truly understand the inner depths of thought that artists might have for their work. Artists can never save the world with their work.

The function of artists is only to be themselves. They can never claim to be mystical saviours. They can only hope that their work might reach a small understanding audience who will find meaning and worth in the activity. This is not elitist for it is open to all those who are willing to try to understand. Owen Warland made his butterfly for himself. The bitter irony is that his act of giving was never truly accepted.

Today, artists cannot turn to their social function as a justification for their activity for it is unclear and unspecified. Art is a relic, and the artist is the pilgrim. Socially undeified artists can only leave the traces of their progress and journey. They cannot claim to be saving the world as they travel, they can only travel for their own need. Artists, like the beggar on the street, are separate from their community, seeking something beyond it. The results of their journeys are varied. Perhaps one will be deified as being socially significant and many others with go down in obscurity. Nevertheless, they have travelled their journey.

Looking back to Michelangelo, one can separate the public function of the artist from his personal, private role. The latter was chosen by the artist as the reason for his work, the center of his activity. His society could not incorporate this private vision into

the functions allotted to artisans. How can the glorification and idealization of the human body be a social function? Michelangelo journeyed for himself. This, the journey, at once is both the function and struggle of artists.

Teacher's Comment

Paragraph 2:
He also designed the fortifications for Florence plus architectural designs like St. Peters, etc.

Paragraph 4, Lines 2,3: Yes
Line 8: Do you think that perhaps this idea led to the exaltation of the human over the divine?

Paragraph 5: Well done.

Paragraph 7: You might enjoy reading Walt Whitman's Preface to his first edition of Leaves of Grass to see his concept of the function of the poet/artist.

Paragraph 11: Could this be why Hawthorne has the child crust the butterfly rather than an adult?

Paragraph 12: Quite true.

Paragraph 14: And aren't we all on such journeys. Life is a quest and a discovery.

Grade A

Excellent paper. Your depth of understanding and ability to express your ideas are outstanding traits for a young artist. You have great potential.

Literary Analysis

An Innocent Man

Many people tend to view the protagonist in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Birthmark" in a negative light. Literature students, critics, and even professors have come away from reading about Aylmer with comments on his character that are less than complimentary. Too often, he has been called "Aylmer the Villain" when in fact he should be called "Aylmer the Innocent."

The dictionary offers "a wicked or evil character" as one definition of a villain. But do the words and actions of the idealist Aylmer appear wicked or evil?

For us to follow the line of least resistance is to sympathize with Georgiana from the outset when her husband abruptly tells her how he feels about "the crimson hand" on her cheek. After all, she is "deeply hurt; at first reddening with momentary anger, but then bursting into tears" (268). Sympathy increases as Georgiana begins to feel more uncomfortable with this slight imperfection. We are given the impression that her dissatisfaction with the mark is the direct result of Aylmer and his feeling on the matter; so anti-Aylmer sentiment grows stronger. Things become more complicated as the couple decides to remove the mark at all costs. Aylmer demonstrates a large amount of self-assurance when he speaks of his conviction in successfully removing the birthmark. As if that isn't enough Aylmer has a dark and dank laboratory with an eerie assistant. And it is in this foreboding setting that Georgiana drinks Aylmer's potion, which removes the mark but also kills her.

There is no question that this is indeed a sad story. but it is not a narrative of wickedness or evilness, qualities that can justifiably be spoken out against. There is no crime in perfectionism. And while Aylmer is willing to do almost anything to achieve perfection, there is nothing malevolent in his actions. He is an innocent man who simply cannot help himself.

Hawthorne, often writing with intentional ambiguity, does not leave much doubt as to the purity of his protagonist's intentions. This fact is especially true for those who read from a primarily logical standpoint rather than an emotional one. In describing Aylmer's thoughts the author writes, " . . . He invariably and without intending it, . . . in spite of a purpose to the contrary, reverted to this one disastrous topic" (269). Hawthorne goes on to use the passive tense to show Aylmer's unwillingness to become preoccupied with the mark. In fact, we see him attempting to suppress his subconscious mind. Aylmer will not say anything but the sight of the mark does cause him to shudder. When Georgiana is in his lab Aylmer tries to reassure her but Hawthorne says, "He could not restrain a strong convulsive shudder" (271). This mark takes over his mind and is intimately connected with his subconscious.

A closer look at the story reveals that which is often overlooked on a primarily emotional level. Aylmer lacks ill will. When he comments on the birthmark it is easy

to think that a man in love with his wife should overlook something apparently so insignificant, but this view totally ignores the perfectionist inside who views his own successes as failures because he fails to accomplish what he has set out to do. That which is good enough for others simply won't do for him. This does not make him evil or wicked.

We also read of Georgiana's growing concern for her appearance because of her husband. In this patriarchal society, her tears wrench from us an almost automatic sympathy, and we seem to abe privy to yet another case of a domineering husband pushing for his own way regardless of how much the helpless wife hurts. But this is no pliable Georgiana, who stays at home and does as her husband commands. Hawthorne lets us know that she is an individual thinker who is both able and willing to bear full responsibility for her decisions. We are told that she has a "firmness of which she possesses no stinted endowment" (276). Aylmer, aside from his casual suggestion at the beginning of the story, is not the one who insists upon its removal. Aylmer is certainly willing, but he is not about to push. Hawthorne tells us that Aylmer (after his wife brings up the subject) remembers his dream about the operation, feels guilty, but says nothing. It is Georgiana who shouts, "Remove this dreadful hand, or take my wretched life" (270). And these words are not the reluctant ravings of a bullied woman. She sits down and takes an analytical approach to the entire situation, concluding that Aylmer is an honorable man whose love is pure and lofty.

As a society that is all too willing to settle for a status quo replete with mediocrity, we find difficulty in identifying with the likes of Aylmer. He is the quintessential perfectionist whose very soul is dissatisfied with anything less than the best. The protagonist is unable to look at the mark without having his body involuntarily rebel. "His spirit recoiled . . . ", says Hawthorne using language that once again connotes lack of volition on Aylmer's part to behave otherwise. Even his wife realizes his helplessness, or on her deathbed she states, "You have aimed loftily; you have done nobly" (278). She can see his innocence, and yet we seem to be unable to do the same.

The primary reason we come down on Aylmer can be nailed down to one fact--his wife dies in the end. But if we remove the ending and rather than have Georgiana die we let her live, our perception totally changes. We can more clearly see the Aylmer that, at one point, tells her that he would not do that which would work "inharmonious effects" on their lives. Let Georgiana live, and we can now see a man whose entire life has been built upon improvement, succeeding in doing so on a regular basis. Let Georgiana live, and we can now see a man whose entire life has been built upon improvement, succeeding in doing so on a regular basis. Let Georgiana live, and we see a success story that runs in consonance with the Franklinian ethic, "Work hard and you will be duly rewarded." Let Georgiana live, and we'll be quite willing to sing the praises of the patriarchal system, of how the all-encompassing man through his efforts is able to drag the helpless woman from the pit of despair.

True, Georgiana actually dies, but this does not negate Aylmer's innocence. We cannot ignore the purity of Aylmer's intentions coupled with his conviction of success

without loss of life. We cannot condemn his confidence because if we ourselves are witness to an elixir's success in removing spots from a plant, where is our cause for doubt? It is also true that he is aware of the risks but he does not expect the risks to go against them in the least, a belief strengthened by his wife's consent as the individual with more at stake than an ideal. If we wish to start placing blame and pointing fingers, let us look elsewhere, perhaps at Georgiana herself, because Aylmer is truly--an innocent man.

Teacher's Comments

I agree with you up to a point. Hawthorne doesn't want us to embrace Aminadab's thoroughgoing earthiness, to deny our spiritual nature and our conception of perfection, but here's the rub. We are spiritual, but we have a material existence; we can envision perfection, but we cannot achieve it in our earthly existence. Thus, we live in tension, which Hawthorne dramatizes by splitting characters into body and spirit emphases. Just as it would be a mistake to forget our spiritual natures, so it would be a mistake to forget our material existence, though perhaps this is the more admirable of the alternative.

The "let Georgiana live" sequence would only be persuasive if it seemed to me like there was a chance she could have lived, that the experiment just turned out unlucky. Then you could argue "it could have worked" and Aylmer was just the victim of bad breaks. But crucial to the story, from our retrospective viewpoint, is the certain knowledge that it must have failed.

Your argument that Aylmer is not pushy about wanting to remove the mark depends on a purely verbal definition of pushiness. If we allow that his invariable shudders around Georgiana, his refusal to kiss her on "that" cheek, and his general moodiness after the removal idea takes hold of him, I think we can say that Georgiana was pushed by Aylmer to ask for the operation, even if his actions were involuntary.

Once again, your argumentation and writing style are fine throughout.
Just a simple phrase like "replete with mediocrity," or a simple sentence like the one at the end of the paragraph, say a lot about a writer. Keep it up. I appreciate your work.

Grade: A

Note: You might find Hawthorne's "Artist of the Beautiful" an interesting comparison to "The Birthmark." Once again, you have a body character and a spirit character, though with a somewhat different perspective.

Appendix D

SAMPLE ESSAY TOPICS

Honors in Literature

Directions: Follow the same general guidelines for this paper as for Paper I. The paper should be 3-4 typewritten pages, double spaced. This paper will be due at class time on Thursday, February 28.

1. Thoreau in *Walden* points out that the majority of men "lead lives of quiet desperation." What relevance do you see between this statement and "The Artist of the Beautiful" and/or *The Agony and the Ecstasy*?

2. Discuss in depth one of the following themes, using supporting evidence from "The Artist and the Beautiful" and *The Agony and the Ecstasy*.

   a. The artistic temperament
   b. The artist's motivation, both external and internal
   c. The artist's isolation and his creation of art
   d. The artist's conflicts--an asset or detriment to his art
   e. The artist's role in society, in both the secular and Christian world

3. Richard H. Fogle, an important Hawthorne critic, points out that "The Artist of the Beautiful" is made up of a series of oppositions, one being idealism vs. society's materialism. Develop this point by presenting possible evidence and discuss other possible opposition you find in this story.

4. Compare and contrast Owen Warland of Hawthorne's "The Artist and the Beautiful" with Michelangelo of Stone's *The Agony and the Ecstasy*. Discuss their similarities and differences.

5. Discuss Michelangelo's "terribilita"--is this his secret success? Or are other characteristics more dominant?

6. Discuss Michelangelo's conflict between his Christian ideas and the Neo-Platonic conception of beauty. What influences of each are evident in his work? Would you call Michelangelo a religious person? Why?

7. Stone portrays Michelangelo as having his own unique concept of God. Discuss what you think this concept is and how it comes through in the book.

8. Discuss the theme of prejudice and tolerance in *The Agony and the Ecstasy* and "The Artist of the Beautiful."

9. What do you see the role of the artist to be in contemporary society? How might the obstacles an artist might face today be similar to or different from those faced by Michelangelo?

10. Characterize the Michelangelo created by Stone. What were his basic motivations?

What changes are seen as he matures? Was he a tormented man? An oddity of humanity? What made him hard to live with yet indispensable?

11. Compare and contrast any two characters we have studied so far this quarter. You may choose two characters in the same work or one character from two different works. Suggestions could include: Michelangelo and Warland, Michelangelo and Andrea del Sarto, Owen Warland and Danforth, Emily Dickinson and another artist of your choice.

12. Analyze and discuss attitudes toward art taken by at least four characters (artists) we have read about so far this quarter, such as Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Fra Lippo Lippi, Emily Dickinson, Andrea del Sarto, Owen Warland.

Literary Analysis

1. Each O'Connor story that we have read has a revelator/revelatee combination of some kind. Parker's wife/Parker, Mary Grace/Mrs. Turpin, the Bible Salesman/Hulga, The Misfit/The Grandmother, The Black Woman/Julian. Study the role of the revelator and revelatee in two or more of the stories as a way of analyzing what kinds of revelations O'Connor is trying to bring about, and by what techniques.

2. O'Connor's stories not only work revelations on characters--presumably, they are supposed to be revelations to the readers as well. Study carefully how O'Connor works up a revelation for the reader in one of the stories, and how that does or does not parallel the revelation for the character in the story.

3. In addition to the revelator and revelatee, O'Connor typically presents several minor characters in each story. Study how O'Connor uses the minor characters in a particular story to set up and or comment on the main characters.

4. O'Connor sees herself as a religious writer trying to convey religious ideas to a secular world. Write an essay analyzing particular strategies you see her employing to successfully reach this audience, using specific analysis or examples from her stories.

Appendix E

COURSE SYLLABI

Honors in Literature

Textbooks: Syllabus

The Belle of Amherst by William Luce

The Agony and the Ecstasy by Irving Stone

The Song of the Lark by Willa Cather

My Name is Asher Lev by Chaim Potok

Objectives: To read a variety of works of literature in which a creative artist, poet, or musician is the major character and to discuss important issues and ides that are raised as related to theme, structure, character development, etc.

Requirements: The final grade will be based on the following:

1. Full class attendance is required
2. Participation in class discussion and activities
3. Reading quizzes on each book or author
4. Three "thought" papers of three to four pages each

Supplementary Activities: Videotapes of *Belle of Amherst* and *The Agony and the Ecstasy*: times arranged.

Literary Analysis

The Bedford Introduction to Literature

Course Description: English 267, Literary Analysis, an introductory course for English majors and minors, provides practice in reading, discussing, analyzing and interpreting works of literature as a foundation for learning and applying strategies for writing about literature. The course also presents an overview of the most influential critical approaches to literary interpretation with critical writings to illustrate these approaches. Finally, the course introduces some of the specialized vocabulary of literary studies and the expectations of literary research. Mastery of the concepts and writing assignments in the course should enhance student success in more advanced courses that demand critical analyses of literature.

Course Mechanics

The course will feature a discussion-based class with ample opportunity for student contributions and questions. Students will be expected to read all assignments and to be prepared in class to participate in discussions. Such participation maya be an influence in borderline grade decisions. Grade components include:

a.	Four essays:	15%
	1. Essay on short story	20%
	2. Essay on SS #2	20%
	3. Essay on O'Connor	20%
	4. Essay on Frost	20%
b.	Exam on poetry	15%
c.	Critical reports	05%
d.	Attendance	05%

Grade Scale

A	93+	C+	78-79
A-	90-92	C	73-78
B+	88-89	C-	70-72
B	83-87	D	60-69
B-	80-82		

Further Description of Assignments

a. There will be two essay analyses on miscellaneous short stories, with a range of choices in both story and critical approach. The third essay will be a critical analysis of some aspect of Flannery O'Connor's short stories, using at least two short stories and some critical material (from the reader). The last essay will be a critical analysis of some aspect of Frost's poetry, dealing again with a variety of poems as well as use of the critical material available in the anthology. Essay length should be four to six pages.

b. After the essay on O'Connor, there will be a five period study of poetics: terms useful to the study of poetry and practice interpreting poems. This section of the course will culminate in an exam over poetic terminology, prosody, and an analysis of a poem.

c. Students will read five articles from literary journals, one each week, and report in a page the essence of the article: its main purpose, organization, critical approach, type of evidence employed, along with a brief reaction to the article's interest of value. The reports should be related to the work of an author read during the quarter. A photocopy of the article reviewed and standard bibliographical information should be included.

d. Of the five percent possible, students will be docked 1/2 percent for each absence over two during the quarter.

American Literature

Course Description

American Literature II is designed to be an introduction to the more popular American authors between 1365 and the present. This period is particularly rich in realism, Imagism, Humor, Local color, and Naturalism. The authors of this period compose a very eclectic and diverse group. Careful attention has been devoted to including minority and women writers. Often their viewpoints serve as counter-balances to popular notions of a male-dominated materialistic culture. Also, this period of American letters is replete with strident arguments on the evolving American consciousness. In particular, what are the consummate effects of rapid industrialization on American society? In other words, is there reality an aspect of American consciousness that has not been touched or exploited by corporate imperialism?

Tests

The final grade is derived from four of five 100-point exams. The final exam carries no more weight than a regular exam. Normally, these exams are about 40% objective and 60% essay. There is no grading curve. Exams are listed on the reading schedule.

Grading

The scale for grading is as follows:

100 - 95 = A
94 - 90 = A-
89 - 87 = B+
86 - 84 = B
83 - 80 = B-
79 - 77 = C+
76 - 74 = C
73 - 70 = C-
69 - 60 = C

Text

Baym, et. al. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Volume 2, 2nd Edition.

A daily reading schedule is attached.

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EDUCATION

B.A. (1982)	Theology, Adventist Seminary of West Africa, Nigeria
M.A. (1983)	English (Literature), Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI
Ph.D. (1992)	Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI Major--Curriculum and Instruction Cognate--English (Literature)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

1983-1987	*Instructor of English*, Adventist Seminary of West Africa, Nigeria
1985-1987	*Acting Chair*, Department of Languages and Communication, Adventist Seminary of West Africa, Ilishan Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria
1984-1987	*Editorial Consultant*, All Africa Literature Ministry of the General Conference of SDA
1987-1989	*Contract Teacher*, Department of English, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI
1987-1991	*Graduate Assistant*, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI
1987-1991	*Editor*, College of Arts and Sciences Newsletter
1989-	*Member*, Phi Delta Kappa, International Honor Society

PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS

African Literature, 19th Century American Literature, Qualitative Research Methodologies, Theological Theories